THE HISTORY OF Miſs *Betſy Thoughtleſs.*

VOL. IV.

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M,DCC,LI.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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THE

HISTORY

OF

Miſs BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

CHAP. I.

Contains among other particulars, an example of forgiving goodneſs and generoſity, worthy the imitation of as many as ſhall read it.

THE conſtraint miſs Betſy had put on herſelf, while in the preſence of the company ſhe had been with, had been extremely painful to her; but when ſhe got home ſhe gave a looſe to tears, that common relief of ſorrows: — yet amidſt

all theſe teſtimonies of a violent affection for mr. Trueworth, ſhe would not allow herſelf to imagine, that ſhe was poſſeſſed of any for him, — nor that the vexation ſhe was in proceeded from any other motive, than that of finding a heart, that had once been devoted to her, capable of ſubmitting to the charms of any other woman.

All ſhe could bring herſelf to acknowledge was only, that ſhe had been very much to blame, in treating the propoſals of mr. Trueworth in the light manner ſhe had done; — ſhe now wondered at herſelf for having been ſo blind to the merits of mr. Trueworth's family, eſtate, perſon, and accompliſhments, and accuſed herſelf with the utmoſt ſeverity, for having rejected, what ſhe could not but confeſs, would have been highly for her intereſt, honour, and happineſs to have accepted.

Thus deeply was ſhe buried in a too late repentance, when a letter was brought to her, the ſuperſcription of which was wrote in a hand altogether unknown to her; — on opening it, ſhe found the contents as follows:

To

Marſhalſea Priſon.

To miſs BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

'MADAM,

'AFter the juſt, though ſevere reſolu-
'tion your laſt informed me you had
'taken, of never ſeeing, nor receiving
'any thing from me more, I tremble to
'approach you. — Fearing you would
'not vouchſafe to open this, knowing
'from whence it came, I got a perſon to
'direct it for you, and cannot aſſure my-
'ſelf you will, even now, examine the
'contents ſo far, as to ſee the motive
'which emboldens me to give you this
'trouble.

'I have long ſince rendered myſelf un-
'worthy of your friendſhip; — it is ſolely
'your compaſſion and charity that I now
'implore: — the date of this petition, in
'part, will ſhew the calamity I labour
'under. — I have languiſhed in this
'wretched priſon for upwards of a month,
'for debts my luxury contracted, and
'which I vainly expected would be diſ-
'charged by thoſe, who called themſelves
'my admirers; but, alas! all the return
'they make for favours they ſo ardently
'requeſted, is contempt. — I have been
'obliged to make away with every thing

'their gallantry beſtowed, for my ſup-
'port.

'All the partners of my guilty plea-
'ſures, all thoſe who ſhared with me in
'my riots, are deaf to my complaints,
'and refuſe a pitying ear to the diſtreſs
'they have in a great meaſure contributed
'to bring upon me. — My creditors,
'more merciful than my friends or lovers,
'have conſented to withdraw their actions,
'and I ſhall have my diſcharge on pay-
'ing the fees of this loathſome priſon;
'— three guineas will be ſufficient to re-
'ſtore my liberty, which, if I am ſo for-
'tunate once more to obtain, I will think
'no labour, though ever ſo bad or ab-
'ject, too much, if it can enable me to
'drag on my remains of life in true peni-
'tence.'

'Dear madam, if, by favouring me
'with the ſum I mention, you are ſo
'good as to open my priſon gates, heaven
'will, I doubt not, reward the generous
'bounty; and if the Almighty will vouch-
'ſafe to hear the prayers of an abandoned
'creature like me, I ſhall never ceaſe to
'invoke his choiceſt bleſſings may be
'ſhowered down on the head of my
'charming deliverer.

'I

'I ſhall ſend to-morrow morning by a 'poor honeſt woman, whom I can con-'fide in, for your anſwer. — I beſeech 'you to be aſſured, that if once freed 'from this deteſted place, no temptations 'of what kind ſoever ſhall ever prevail 'upon me to return to my yet more de-'teſted former courſe of life, and am de-'termined to fly to ſome remote corner 'of the kingdom, as diſtant from Lon-'don as from Leiceſterſhire, and there 'endeavour to earn a wretched pittance, 'by means how low ſoever I care not. — 'Your grant of the requeſt I make you 'at this time, will ſave both the ſoul 'and body of her, who is,

'With the moſt unfeigned contrition,

'MADAM,

'Your moſt humble,

'And moſt unfortunate ſervant,

'A. FORWARD.'

Utterly impoſſible was it for this unhappy creature to have ſent her petition at a more unlucky time: — miſs Betſy, full of the idea of the misfortune ſhe had ſuſtained in the loſs of mr. Trueworth, could

not be reminded of miſs Forward, without being alſo reminded, that the firſt occaſion of his diſguſt was owing to her acquaintance with that woman.

'Infamous creature!' cried miſs Betſy, as ſoon as ſhe had done reading; — 'ſhe 'deſerves no compaſſion from the world, 'much leſs from me. — No, — no, — 'there are but too many objects of cha-'rity to be found, and I ſhall not laviſh 'the little bounty I am able to beſtow on 'a wretch like her.'

Theſe were the firſt reflections of miſs Betſy, on receiving ſo unexpected a petition, but they ſoon ſubſided, and gave way to others of a more gentle nature; — 'Yet,' ſaid ſhe, 'if the poor wretch 'is ſenſible of her faults, and truly re-'ſolved to do as ſhe pretends, it would 'be the utmoſt cruelty to deny her the 'means of fulfilling the promiſe ſhe 'makes of amendment.'

'How unhappy is our ſex,' continued ſhe, 'either in a too much, or too little 'ſenſibility of the tender paſſion; — ſhe 'was, alas! too eaſily influenced by the 'flatteries of the baſe part of mankind, 'and I too little grateful to the merits of 'of the beſt.'

In

In fine, the natural goodneſs of her diſpoſition got the aſcendant over all conſiderations that oppoſed the grant of miſs Forward's requeſt. — 'My acquaintance 'with her has been fatal to me,' ſaid ſhe; 'but that was leſs owing to her fault 'than my own folly.'

Accordingly ſhe ſent by the woman, who came next morning, as mentioned in the letter, four guineas enclofed in a piece of paper, and wrote to her in theſe terms:

To miſs FORWARD.

'MADAM,

'THOUGH I cannot but look upon 'your misfortunes as juſtly fallen on 'you, yet heartily commiſerate them:— 'if your penitence is ſincere, I doubt not 'but you will ſome way or other be 'enabled to purſue a more laudable courſe 'of life, than that which has brought 'you into this diſtreſs. — I add one gui- 'nea to the ſum you requeſted, and wiſh 'it were in my power to do more, being

'Your real well-wiſher,

'And humble ſervant,

'B. THOUGHTLESS.'

Though no one could have more refined notions of virtue, nor a greater abhorrence for vice, than this young lady, yet did ſhe never hate the perſons of the guilty, nor would judge with that ſeverity of their faults, which ſome others, much leſs innocent, are apt to do.

It pleaſed her to think, that by this donation ſhe ſhould gladden the heart of an afflicted perſon, who had been of her acquaintance, how unworthy ſoever of late ſhe had rendered herſelf; and this little interruption of her meditations contributed a good deal to compoſe her mind, after the ſudden ſhock it had ſuſtained on the ſcore of mr. Trueworth's marriage.

But ſhe had very ſhortly another, and more agreeable relief: — ſir Ralph and lady Truſty came to town; — which ſhe no ſooner was informed of, and where a houſe had been taken for their reception, than ſhe went early the next morning to pay her reſpects, and teſtify the real ſatisfaction ſhe conceived at their arrival.

Nothing of buſineſs would probably have been ſaid to her on this firſt viſit, if her two brothers had not come in immediately after. — The firſt compliments on ſuch

ſuch an occaſion being over: — 'ſir 'Ralph,' ſaid the elder mr. Thoughtleſs, 'we have wiſhed for your coming to 'town on many accounts, but on none ſo 'much as that of my ſiſter, who is go-'ing to be married, and has only waited 'to intreat you will do her the favour of 'diſpoſing of her hand.'

The good baronet replied, that there was nothing he ſhould do with greater pleaſure, provided it were to a perſon worthy of her. — 'That, ſir,' ſaid the elder mr. Thoughtleſs, 'we have taken 'care to be convinced of, and I doubt 'not but you will think as we do, when 'you ſhall be informed of the particulars.' — Miſs Betſy bluſhed, but uttered not a word, either to oppoſe, or to agree to what had been ſaid.

Lady Truſty perceiving her in ſome confuſion, led her into another room, in order to talk ſeriouſly to her, on many things ſhe had in her head.

CHAP. II.

Is very full of Buſineſs.

THE two brothers of miſs Betſy having ſome reaſon to apprehend, ſhe would ſtill find ſome pretence, if poſſible, to evade fulfilling the promiſe ſhe had made them, in regard to mr. Munden, and alſo, that he, finding himſelf trifled with, might become weary of proſecuting ſo unavailing a ſuit, and break off as mr. Trueworth had done, reſolved to omit nothing in their power for bringing to a concluſion an affair, which ſeemed to them ſo abſolutely neceſſary for ſecuring the honour of their family, in that of their ſiſter.

They ſuſpected, that her putting off the marriage till the arrival of ſir Ralph and lady Truſty, was only to gain time, and invent ſome excuſe to get that lady on her ſide: — they therefore judged it highly proper to acquaint her previouſly with the motives, which made them ſo impatient to ſee their ſiſter diſpoſed of, and by that means prevent her ladyſhip from being

ing prepoſſeſſed by any ideas the other might prepare for that purpoſe.

Accordingly, mr. Francis Thoughtleſs having been informed by letter, of the day in which they intended to be in town, he went on horſeback, and met them at the inn where they dined, about twenty miles from London.

That good lady was ſo much troubled at the recital he made her of miſs Betſy's late adventures, that ſhe could not forbear letting fall ſome tears; and though ſhe laid the blame of her ill-conduct chiefly on her having lived ſo long under the tuition and example of a woman, ſuch as lady Mellaſin; yet ſhe could not but allow there was a certain vanity in her compoſition, as dangerous to virtue, as to reputation, and that marriage was the only defence for both.

Sir Ralph, who was an extreme facetious, good-natured man, was a little pleaſant on what his lady had ſaid on this occaſion. — 'You forget, my dear,' cried he, 'how many ladies of late have broke 'the conjugal hoop, and think themſelves 'juſtified in doing ſo, by having been 'prevailed upon to enter into it without

'inclination. — Remember the words of 'the humorous poet Hudibraſs:

"Wedlock without love, ſome ſay,
"Is but a lock without a key;
"And 'tis a kind of rape to marry
"One, who neglects, or cares not for ye;
"For what does make it raviſhment,
"But being againſt the mind's conſent.'

'Does miſs Betſy,' continued he, to mr. Francis, 'love the gentleman you 'would have her marry?' — To which the other replied, 'That the temper of 'his ſiſter was too capricious for any one 'to be able to judge of the real ſituation 'of her heart, or even for herſelf to be 'perfectly aſſured of it.'

He then proceeded to inform him how long mr. Munden had courted her, and of the great encouragement ſhe had always given to his addreſſes: — her ſubmitting the deciſion of the affair to the elder mr. Thoughtleſs's inſpection into the circumſtances of his eſtate, which being found agreeable to the report made of it, ſhe now only waited, or pretended to wait, for the approbation of ſir Ralph, as being by her father's will conſtituted her guardian.

'Well

'Well then,' ſaid ſir Ralph, 'ſince it 'is ſo, and you are all deſirous it ſhould 'be a match, I ſhall not fail to give my 'verdict accordingly.'

As impatient as the two brothers were to ſee her married, and out of the way of thoſe temptations ſhe at preſent lay under, they could not be more ſo than lady Truſty now was; — ſhe doubted not, that the virtue and good ſenſe of that young lady, would render her a very good wife, when once ſhe was made one, and therefore heartily wiſhed to ſee her ſettled in the world, even though it were to leſs advantage, than her beauty, and the many good qualities ſhe was poſſeſſed of might entitle her to expect.

It was in order to do every thing in her power to bring about what ſhe thought ſo good a work, that ſhe had drawn miſs Betſy from the company, and retired with her into the cloſet, in the manner already related.

Miſs Betſy, who knew nothing of all this, or even that her brother had gone to meet them on the road, was extremely ſurprized to find by the diſcourſe, with which lady Truſty entertained her, that no

no part of what had happened to her, ever ſince the death of mr. Goodman, was a ſecret to her ladyſhip.

She preſently ſaw, however, it muſt be by her brother Frank, that this intelligence had been given, and was not at all at a loſs to gueſs the motive of his having done it. — 'I find, madam,' ſaid ſhe, 'that all the errors and inadvertencies I 'have been guilty of are betrayed to you, 'and am far from being ſorry they are 'ſo, ſince the gentle reproofs you take 'the trouble to give me, are ſo many 'freſh marks of the friendſhip with which 'you vouchſafe to honour me, and which 'I ſhall always eſteem as my greateſt 'happineſs. — I flatter myſelf, however, 'continued ſhe, that the remembrance of 'what has lately befallen me, and the 'imminent dangers I have eſcaped will 'enable me to regulate my conduct, in 'ſuch a manner, as to give your ladyſhip 'no farther pain on my account.'

Lady Truſty on this embraced her with the utmoſt tenderneſs, and told her, that there were few things ſhe either wiſhed or hoped for with greater ardency, than to ſee her happily ſettled, and freed from all temptations of what kind ſoever.

This

This worthy lady then fell on the ſubject of mr. Munden, and recapitulated all the arguments which had been already urged, to perſwade her to come to a determination: — in fine, ſhe left nothing unſaid, that was ſuitable to the occaſion.

Miſs Betſy liſtened to her with the moſt ſubmiſſive attention, and after a ſhort pauſe, replied in theſe terms:—'Madam,' ſaid ſhe, 'I am convinced by my own 'reaſon, as well as by what your lady-'ſhip has been pleaſed to ſay, that I have 'indeed gone too far with mr. Munden 'to be able to go back with honour, and 'ſince I find he has the approbation of 'all my friends, ſhall no longer attempt 'to trifle with his pretenſions.'

'You will marry him then,' cried lady Truſty? — 'Yes, madam,' anſwered miſs Betſy; and added, though not without ſome heſitation, 'ſince my marriage is a 'thing ſo much deſired by thoſe, to whoſe 'will I ſhall always be ready to ſubmit, 'mr. Munden has certainly a right to 'expect I ſhould decide in his favour.'

She ſaid no more, but hung down her head, and lady Truſty was going to make ſome reply, — perhaps to aſk how far her

her heart acquieſced in the conſent her tongue had given, but was prevented by ſir Ralph, who puſhing open the door of the room where they were, told her, ſhe engroſſed his fair charge too long; — that it was now time for himſelf, and her brothers, to have ſome ſhare in their converſation.

'Some polite wives, ſir Ralph,' ſaid lady Truſty, laughing, 'would not have excuſed 'ſo abrupt a breaking in on their pri-'vacy, and I aſſure you, if you had inter-'rupted us a moment ſooner, you might 'have ſpoiled all; for miſs Betſy has but 'juſt given me her promiſe to marry mr. 'Munden.'

'I ſhould have been heartily ſorry in-'deed,' ſaid he, 'if my over zeal had 'rendered me a Marplot on this occaſion; '— but come,' continued he, 'ſince the 'young lady has at laſt reſolved, let us 'carry the joyful news to her brothers.'

In ſpeaking theſe words he gave one of his hands to lady Truſty, and the other to miſs Betſy, and led them into the dining room, where the mr. Thoughtleſſes were: — 'Well, gentlemen,' ſaid he, 'your 'ſiſter has at laſt conſented to give you a 'brother,

'brother, — pray thank her for the addition ſhe is going to make to your family.'

'I hope,' ſaid the elder mr. Thoughtleſs, 'ſhe will find her own happineſs in 'doing ſo. — The younger added ſomething to the ſame purpoſe. — After this the converſation turned chiefly on the ſolid ſatisfaction of a married life, in which miſs Betſy took but little part, only ſaying to her two brothers: — 'Well, — 'ſince both of you have ſo high an opinion of matrimony, and will needs have 'me, who am by ſome years younger 'than either of you, lead the way, I 'hope I ſhall ſoon ſee you follow the example.'

'Our elder brother,' ſaid mr. Francis, 'may, doubtleſs, marry whenever he 'pleaſes; and as for my part, when it 'can be proved that I have an offer made 'me, equally advantageous to what you 'have rejected, and I ſhould refuſe it, 'I 'could not be angry with the world for 'condemning my want of judgment.'

'No more of that,' cried ſir Ralph; — 'you ſee ſhe hears reaſon at laſt.'—Lady Truſty would fain have perſwaded the gentlemen to ſtay dinner there, but they excuſed

excuſed themſelves, as expecting company at home, and ſaid, if poſſible they would return towards evening; — ſhe would not however permit miſs Betſy to take leave, and her continuing there that whole day happened to bring things ſomewhat ſooner to a concluſion, than perhaps they otherwiſe would have been.

Mr. Munden, as ſoft and complaiſant as he carried it to miſs Betſy, was very much diſguſted in his mind at her late behaviour; — he found ſhe loved him not, and was far from having any violent inclination for her himſelf; but the motives, which had made him perſevere in his courtſhip, after being convinced of the indifference ſhe had for him, made him alſo impatient to bring the affair to as ſpeedy a reſult as poſſible. — Sir Ralph was the laſt perſon to whom ſhe had referred the matter; — he had heard by accident of that gentleman's arrival, and went to her lodgings, in order to ſee in what manner ſhe would now receive him; but not finding her at home, called at the houſe of mr. Thoughtleſs, who had always been very propitious to his ſuit.

On the two brothers returning from ſir Ralph's, they met him juſt coming out of the houſe: — the elder deſired him to walk

walk in, — told him with a great deal of freedom, that ſir Ralph was come to town; — that the buſineſs having been communicated to him, he approved of the match, and his ſiſter had conſented. —Mr. Munden received this information with all the ſeeming tranſport of a man paſſionately in love: — he made them a thouſand retributions for the part they had taken in his intereſt, and they expreſſed no leſs ſatisfaction in the accompliſhment of his deſires. — After ſome few compliments on both ſides, the elder mr. Thoughtleſs informed him, that miſs Betſy was to ſtay the whole day with ſir Ralph and lady Truſty; — that himſelf and brother had promiſed to return thither in the evening, and that he ſhould be glad if he would accompany them, in order that when they were all together, every thing might be ſettled for the completion of the nuptials.

It is not to be doubted but that the lover readily embraced this propoſition, and an hour for his waiting on them being prefixed, he took his leave, the company that was to dine with mr. Thoughtleſs that inſtant coming in.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Will not let the reader fall aſleep.

I Believe the reader will eaſily perceive, that it was owing to the apprehenſions of miſs Betſy's fluctuating diſpoſition, that her brothers teſtified ſo great an impatience for bringing the affair of her marriage to a concluſion; and alſo, that it was to confirm her in her reſolution, and reconcile her to the promiſe ſhe had made, that lady Truſty had kept her with her that whole day.

The arguments urged by that worthy lady; — the obliging and chearful manner in which they were delivered, joined to the facetious and entertaining remarks, which ſir Ralph had occaſionally made, had, indeed, a great effect for the preſent, on the too wavering and uncertain mind they were intended to fix.

Though ſhe was far from expecting mr. Munden would come that evening with her brothers, or even from imagining, he could as yet be informed of what had paſſed in his favour; yet ſhe was not diſpleaſed

pleaſed when ſhe ſaw him enter, and if ſhe looked a little confounded, it was rather to be attributed to modeſty than anger.

That gentleman having made his firſt compliments to ſir Ralph and lady Truſty, on his being preſented to them, flew directly to miſs Betſy, and expreſſed his ſenſe of the happineſs her brothers had made him hope, in terms, the moſt paſſionate that words could form; —ſhe received what he ſaid to her, on this occaſion, with a ſweetneſs which muſt have infinitely charmed a heart truly ſenſible of the tender paſſion: — that of mr. Munden, though leſs delicate than he pretended, could not but be greatly affected with it.

In fine, the behaviour of both towards each other, gave great contentment to all the friends of miſs Betſy; and her elder brother, for form's ſake, recapitulating the propoſal of mr. Munden, concerning her ſettlement and jointure, ſir Ralph gave that approbation in public, which he before had done in private: — the intended bridegroom and mr. Thoughtleſs agreed to go together the next morning to mr. Markland the lawyer, and give him the neceſſary

neceſſary inſtructions for drawing up the marriage articles.

They broke not up company till the night was pretty far advanced, and mr. Thoughtleſs not having his own coach there, a hackney ſet them all down at their reſpective habitations.

Thus far all went extremely well: — the parties chiefly concerned ſeemed perfectly ſatisfied with each other, and with themſelves, for the agreement they had mutually entered into, and there appeared not the leaſt likelihood of any future difficulty that would ariſe to interrupt, or delay the conſummation of the ſo-much deſired nuptials.

Miſs Betſy had not as yet had time to meditate on what ſhe had given her promiſe to perform: — the joy ſhe found her compliance had given all her friends, — the endearing things they ſaid to her upon the occaſion, and the tranſport mr. Munden had expreſſed, on ſeeing himſelf ſo near the end of all his wiſhes, had kept up her ſpirits, and ſhe imagined, while in their preſence, that her inclination had dictated the conſent her lips had uttered.

But

But when ſhe was alone, — ſhut up in her own appartment; — when ſhe no longer received the kind careſſes of her ſmiling friends, nor the flattering raptures of her future huſband, all the lively ideas, which their converſation and manner of behaviour towards her had inſpired, vaniſhed at once, and gave place to fancies, which might juſtly bear the name of ſplenetic.

'I muſt now look upon myſelf,' ſaid ſhe, 'as already married: — I have pro-'miſed, — it is too late to think of re-'tracting. — A few days hence, I ſup-'poſe, will oblige me to the performance 'of my promiſe, and I may ſay with 'Monimia in the play:

"I have bound up for myſelf a weight
"of cares,
"And how the burthen will be borne
"none knows."

'I wonder,' continued ſhe, 'what can 'make the generality of Women ſo fond of 'marrying? — It looks to me like an in-'fatuation. — Juſt as if it were not a greater 'pleaſure to be courted, complimented, 'admired, and addreſſed by a number, 'than be confined to one, who from a

'ſlave

'ſlave becomes a maſter, and, perhaps, 'uſes his authority in a manner diſagree-'able enough.'

'And yet it is expected from us. — 'One has no ſooner left off one's bib and 'apron, than people cry, — 'Miſs will "ſoon be married.' — And this man, 'and that man, is preſently picked out 'for a huſband. — Mighty ridiculous! — 'they want to deprive us of all the plea-'ſures of life, juſt when one begins to 'have a reliſh for them.'

In this humour ſhe went to bed, nor did ſleep preſent her with images more pleaſing; — ſometimes ſhe imagined herſelf ſtanding on the brink of muddy, troubled waters; — at others, that ſhe was wandering through deſerts, overgrown with thorns and briars; or ſeeking to find a paſſage through ſome ruin'd building, whoſe tottering roof ſeemed ready to fall upon her head, and cruſh her to pieces.

Theſe gloomy repreſentations, amidſt her broken ſlumbers, when vaniſhed, left behind them an uncommon heavineſs upon her waking mind: — ſhe roſe; — but it was only to throw herſelf into a chair, where ſhe ſate for a conſiderable time,

time, like one quite ſtupid and dead to all ſenſations, of every kind.

At laſt, remembring, that they were all to dine at her brother's that day, by appointment, ſhe rouſed herſelf as well as ſhe was able, and ſtarted from the poſture ſhe had been in: — 'I ſee I am at the 'end of all my happineſs,' ſaid ſhe, 'and that my whole future life is con-'demned to be a ſcene of diſquiet; — 'but there is no reſiſting deſtiny; — they 'will have it ſo: —I have promiſed, and 'muſt ſubmit.'

On opening a little cabinet, in which ſhe always kept thoſe things ſhe moſt valued, in order to take out ſome ornaments to put on that day, the picture of mr. Trueworth ſtared her in the face. — 'Ah!' ſaid ſhe, taking it up, and looking attentively upon it, 'if my brother 'Frank and lady Truſty had been in 'town, when the original of this made 'his addreſſes to me, I ſhould then, as 'now, have been compelled to have gi-'ven my hand. — It is likely too I 'ſhould have yielded with the ſame re-'luctance. — Blinded by my vanity, — 'led by a miſtaken pride, — I had not 'conſidered the value I ought to have ſet 'upon his love. — He had not then done

'any thing for me more than any other 'man, who pretended courtſhip to me, 'would have done. — I know not how 'it is, I did not then think him half ſo 'agreeable as I now find he is. — What 'a ſweetneſs is there in theſe eyes!' cried ſhe, ſtill looking on the picture. — '— What an air of dignity in every fea-'ture! — Wit, — virtue, — bravery, — 'generoſity, — and every amiable quality 'that can adorn mankind, methinks are 'here compris'd.'

'But to what purpoſe do I now ſee all 'theſe perfections in him!' went ſhe on. '— He is the right of another; — he has 'given himſelf to one, who knows better 'than my unhappy ſelf to do juſtice to 'ſuch exalted merit: — he thinks no 'more of me, and I muſt henceforth think 'no more of him.'

She ended theſe words with a deep ſigh, and ſome tears, then laid the picture up, and endeavoured to compoſe herſelf as well as ſhe could.

She was but juſt dreſt when mr. Munden came to wait on her, and conduct her to her brother's, where they were to dine: — he told her, he had been with the elder mr. Thoughtleſs at the lawyer's about

about the writings; — 'ſo that now, my 'angel,' ſaid he, 'I flatter myſelf, that my 'days of languiſhment are near a period.'

He took the freedom of accompanying theſe words with a pretty warm embrace. — 'Forbear,' mr. Munden,' cried ſhe, with the moſt forbidding coldneſs; — 'you have yet no right to liberties of 'this nature.'

'Cruel and unkind miſs Betſy!' reſumed he; — 'muſt nothing then be al-'lowed to love, and all be left to law?' — He then went on with ſome diſcourſes of the paſſion he had for her, and the joy he felt in the thoughts of his approaching happineſs: — to all which ſhe made very ſhort replies, 'till at laſt it came into her head to interrupt him in the midſt of a very tender exclamation, by ſaying, — 'Mr. Munden, I forgot to 'mention one thing to you; but it is 'not yet too late, — I ſuppoſe you de-'ſign to keep a coach?'

This a little ſtartled him, and looking upon her with a very grave air, — 'Ma-'dam,' ſaid he, 'you are ſenſible my 'eſtate will not permit me to oblige you 'in this point.' — 'And can you imagine

'I will ever marry to trudge on foot,' cried ſhe?

'I ſhould be both ſorry and aſhamed,' replied he, 'to ſee you do that; but 'there are other conveniencies, which 'will, I hope, content you, 'till fortune 'puts it in my power to do otherwiſe.'

He then reminded her of the expectations ſhe had frequently heard him make mention of, concerning his hopes of ſoon obtaining, both an honourable and lucrative employment, and aſſured her, that as ſoon as he had procured a grant of it, he would ſet up an equipage accordingly.

But this did not at all ſatisfy her; — ſhe inſiſted on having a coach directly, and gave him ſome hints, as if ſhe would not marry without one, which very much nettling him, he deſired ſhe would remember her promiſe, which was abſolutely given, without the leaſt mention of a coach being made.

'I would not have you,' ſaid ſhe, 'inſiſt too much on that promiſe, leſt I 'ſhould be provoked to give you the 'ſame anſwer Leonora, in the play, gives 'to her importunate lover:

'That

" That boaſted promiſe ties me not
" to time,
" And bonds without a date, they ſay
" are void."

Mr. Munden could not now contain his temper; — he told her, he could not have expected ſuch treatment, after his long ſervices, and her favourable acceptance of them: — that he thought he merited, at leaſt, a ſhew of kindneſs from her; and in fine, that ſhe did not act towards him as became a woman of honour.

This was a reproach, which the ſpirit of miſs Betſy was too high to bear; — ſhe bluſhed with indignation, and caſting the moſt diſdainful look upon him, was about to make ſome anſwer, which, perhaps, in the humour he then was, would have occaſioned him to retort in ſuch a manner, as might have broken off all the meaſures which had been ſo long concerting, if a ſudden interruption had not prevented it.

Mr. Francis Thoughtleſs not knowing any thing of mr. Munden's being there, and happening to paſs that way, called on his ſiſter to know if ſhe was ready to go

to his brother's, it being near dinner time; — he immediately perceived, by both their countenances, that ſome brulée had happened between them, and on his aſking, in a gay manner, the cauſe of it, mr. Munden made no ſcruple to relate the ſum of what had paſſed. — The brother of miſs Betſy, though in his heart very much vexed with her, affected to treat what mr. Munden had ſaid as a bagatelle, and calling to his ſiſter's footman to get a hackney coach to the door, made them both go with him to his brother's, ſaying, They would there adjuſt every thing.

CHAP. IV.

Contains, among other particulars, certain bridal admonitions.

THOUGH mr. Francis Thoughtleſs did not judge it convenient to reproach his ſiſter in the preſence of mr. Munden, on the complaints of that gentleman; yet ſhe had no ſooner vented the little ſpleen ſhe had been that inſtant poſſeſſed of, than ſhe began to accuſe herſelf of having been too poignant to a perſon, whom ſhe had promis'd to make her huſband.

To

To attone, therefore, for the ſeverity of her late behaviour, — 'This is a good 'handſome clean hack,' ſaid ſhe, with a ſmile; — 'one would think my fellow 'had pitched on ſuch a one on purpoſe, 'to keep me from regretting my not hav-'ing one of my own.'

'I only wiſh, madam,' replied mr. Munden, 'that you might be reconciled 'to ſuch things as are in my power to 'accommodate you with, 'till I am ſo 'happy to preſent you with every thing 'you can deſire.' — 'Let us talk no 'more of that,' cried ſhe; — 'be aſſured 'that whatever I may have ſaid, I am 'far from thinking the happineſs of life 'conſiſts in grandeur.'

Mr. Munden, on theſe words, kiſſed her hand, and ſhe permitted him to hold it between his, till they came out of the coach.

This, indeed, had been the very laſt effort of all the maiden pride and vanity of miſs Betſy, and mr. Munden hence-forward had no reaſon to complain of her behaviour towards him.

Sir Ralph Truſty, in regard to his age and character, had the honour of nominating the day for the celebration of their nuptials, and miſs Betſy made no excuſes, in order to protract the time, but agreed with as much readineſs, as her future bridegroom could have wiſhed.

The good lady Truſty, as well as the two mr. Thoughtleſſes, however, being not yet able to aſſure themſelves, that nothing was to be feared from the uncertainty of her temper, did every thing in their power to keep her in good humour with her fate; — and to their endeavours it may, perhaps, be aſcribed, much more than to the force of her own reſolution, that ſhe ceaſed to be guilty of any thing that might give the leaſt cauſe of diſcontent to mr. Munden, or betray that which, in ſpite of all ſhe could do, preyed upon herſelf.

To theſe aſſiduities of her friends, another motive might alſo be added, for the keeping up her ſpirits, which was that of her mind being continually employed: — mr. Munden had taken a very handſome houſe; — the upholſterer received all the orders for the furniſhing it from her. — There were beſides many other things neceſſary

ceſſary for the rendering it compleat, that were not in his province to ſupply: — the going, therefore, to ſhops and warehouſes for that purpoſe, took a very great part of her time. — What could be ſpared from theſe, and ſome other preparations for her wedding, either lady Truſty, or her brothers, had the addreſs to engage: — one or other of them were always with her, 'till the night was far advanced, and ſleep became more welcome than any meditations ſhe could indulge.

The appointed day at length arrived; — ſhe was conducted to the altar by ſir Ralph Truſty, where being met by mr. Munden, the ceremony of marriage was performed, — none being preſent at it but lady Truſty, and her two brothers; for as ſhe could not have it celebrated with that pomp and eclat, agreeable to a woman of her humour, ſhe had earneſtly deſired it might be done with all the privacy imaginable.

The indiſſoluble knot now tied, they proceeded to Pontac's, where an elegant entertainment being prepared for them, by mr. Munden's orders, they dined, and afterwards went all together, to a lodging mr. Munden had hired for a ſmall time,

in a little village five or ſix miles from London.

This he had done to oblige his bride, who had told him, ſhe deſired to be loſt to the world, 'till the firſt diſcourſe of their marriage ſhould be over, to avoid the viſits and congratulations of their friends on that occaſion.

It would be needleſs to tell the reader, that there was a general ſcene of joy amidſt this little company: — mr. Munden expreſſed, and indeed felt, an infinity of tranſport, on having triumphed over ſo many difficulties, which had for a long time continually riſen to impede his wiſhes. — The two mr. Thoughtleſſes were extremely overjoyed, on thinking a period was put to all their cares in relation to their ſiſter: — lady Truſty alſo, and ſir Ralph looking on this marriage, as things were circumſtanced, highly convenient for miſs Betſy, were very much pleaſed; —ſo that it muſt neceſſarily follow, that an event, which coſt ſo much pains to bring about, muſt occaſion a general contentment in the minds of all thoſe, who had ſo ſtrenuouſly laboured for it.

Amidſt this ſcene of joy, miſs Betſy herſelf was the only perſon whoſe countenance

nance diſcovered the leaſt penſiveneſs; nor was her's any more than what might be attributed to the modeſty of a virgin bride.

Lady Truſty, however, who had obſerved her all day with an attentive eye, thought it proper to give her ſome admonitions, concerning her future behaviour, before ſhe took her leave.

To this end, ſhe drew her into another room, apart from the company, and having told her, ſhe had ſomething of moment to ſay to her, began to entertain her in the following manner:

'My dear child,' ſaid ſhe, 'you are 'now, I fear, more through your com-'pliance with the deſires of your friends, 'than through your own inclination, en-'tered into a ſtate, the happineſs of 'which greatly depends on the part you 'act in the firſt ſcenes of it: — there are 'ſome women, who think they can ne-'ver teſtify too much fondneſs for their 'huſbands, and that the name of wife is 'a ſufficient ſanction for giving a looſe to 'the utmoſt exceſſes of an extravagant 'and romantic paſſion; — but this is a 'weakneſs, which I am pretty certain 'you will ſtand in no need of my advice

'to guard againſt. — I am rather appre-
'henſive of your running into a contrary
'extreme, equally dangerous to your fu-
'ture peace, as to that of your huſband.
'— A conſtant and unmoved inſenſibility
'will in time chill the moſt warm affec-
'tion, and, perhaps, raiſe ſuſpicions in
'him of the cauſe, which would be ter-
'rible indeed; — beware, therefore, I
'conjure you, how you affect to deſpiſe,
'or treat with any marks of contempt,
'or even of too much coldneſs, a tender-
'neſs which he has a right to expect you
'ſhould return in kind, as far at leaſt as
'modeſty and diſcretion will permit you
'to beſtow.

'As to your conduct in family affairs,' continued this good lady, 'I would have 'you always confine yourſelf to ſuch 'things, as properly appertain to your 'own province, never interfering with 'ſuch as belong to your huſband: — be 'careful to give to him all the rights of 'his place, and at the ſame time main-'tain your own, though without ſeeming 'to be too tenacious of them. — If any 'diſpute happen to ariſe between you, 'concerning ſuperiority, though in mat-'ters of the ſlighteſt moment, rather re-'cede a little from your due, than con-'tend too far; but let him ſee you yield

'more

'more to oblige him, than becauſe you 'think yourſelf bound to do ſo.'

'Mr. Munden, I flatter myſelf, has 'every qualification to make you happy, 'and to ſhew that your friends, in ad-'viſing you to marry him, have not mis-'led your choice; but as perfection is 'not to be found on this ſide the grave, 'and the very beſt of us are not exempt 'from the frailties of human nature, what-'ever errors he may happen to fall into, 'as it does not become you to reprimand 'him, I wiſh you would never take no-'tice you have obſerved them. — A man 'of the ſtricteſt honour and good ſenſe 'may ſometimes ſlip, — be guilty of ſome 'ſlight forgetfulneſſes; but then he will 'recover of himſelf, and be aſhamed of 'his miſtake. — Whereas reproaches only 'ſerve to harden the indignant mind, 'and make it rather chuſe to perſevere 'in the vices it deteſts, than to return to 'the virtues it admires, if warned by the 'remonſtrances of another.'

'But above all things,' added ſhe, 'I 'would wiſh you to conſider, that thoſe 'too great gaieties of life you have hi-'therto indulged, which, however inno-'cent, could not eſcape cenſure while

'in

'in a ſingle ſtate, will now have a much 'worſe aſpect in a married one.'

'Miſtake me not, my dear,' purſued ſhe, after a pauſe, finding by miſs Betſy's countenance, that what ſhe had ſaid on this ſcore had ſtung her to the quick, 'I 'would not have you deprive yourſelf of 'thoſe pleaſures of life which are becom-'ing your ſex, your age, and character; '— there is no neceſſity that becauſe you 'are a wife you ſhould become a mope: '— I only recommend a proper medium 'in theſe things.'

Her ladyſhip was going on, when miſs Betſy's ſervants, whom ſhe had ordered to bring ſuch part of her baggage as ſhe thought would be needful while ſhe ſtayed in that place, came with it into the chamber, on which this kind adviſer told her fair friend, that ſhe would refer what ſhe had farther to ſay on theſe ſubjects, 'till another opportunity.

Miſs Betſy replied, that ſhe would treaſure up in her heart all the admonitions ſhe would at any time be pleaſed to give her, and that ſhe hoped her future conduct would demonſtrate, that no part of what her ladyſhip had ſaid was loſt upon her.

With

With theſe words they returned into the dining-room, and the cloſe of day ſoon after coming on, ſir Ralph and his lady, with the two mr. Thoughtleſſes, took leave of the bride and bridegroom, and came back to town.

CHAP. V.

Seems to demand, for more reaſons than one, a greater ſhare of attention than ordinary, in the peruſal of it.

THE fair wife of mr. Munden, — miſs Betſy now no more, — had promiſed nothing at the altar, that ſhe was not reſolved religiouſly to perform; — ſhe began ſeriouſly to conſider on the duties of her place; — ſhe was ignorant of no part of them, and ſoon became fully convinced, that on a ſtrict obſervance of them depended her honour, — her reputation, — her peace of mind, and, in fine, all that was dear to a woman of virtue and underſtanding.

To give the more weight to theſe reflections, ſhe alſo called to her mind the long perſeverance of mr. Munden; — his conſtant

conſtant aſſiduities to pleaſe her, — his patient ſubmitting to all the little caprices of her humour; and eſtabliſhing in herſelf an aſſured belief of the ardour and ſincerity of his affection for her, her gratitude, her good nature, and good ſenſe, much more than compenſated for the want of inclination; — and without any of thoſe languiſhments, — thoſe violent emotions, which bear the name of love, rendered her capable of giving more real and more valuable proofs of that paſſion, than are ſometimes to be found amongſt thoſe, who profeſs themſelves, and are looked upon by the world as the moſt fond wives.

In ſpite of her endeavours, the thoughts of mr. Trueworth would, however, ſometimes come into her mind, but ſhe repelled them with all her might; and as the merits of that gentleman would, in reality, admit of no compariſon with any thing that mr. Munden had to boaſt of, ſhe laboured to overbalance the perfections of the one, by that tender and paſſionate affection with which ſhe flattered herſelf ſhe now was, and always would be regarded by the other.

Thus happily diſpoſed to make the bonds ſhe had entered into eaſy to herſelf, and perfectly agreeable to the perſon with

with whom ſhe was engaged, he had indeed a treaſure in her beyond what he could ever have imagined, or her friends, from her former behaviour, had any reaſon to have expected; and had he been truly ſenſible of the value of the jewel he poſſeſſed, he would have certainly been compleatly bleſſed; — but happineſs is not in the power of every one to enjoy, tho' heaven and fortune denies nothing to their wiſhes; — but of this hereafter.

At preſent, all was joy and tranſport on the ſide of the bridegroom; — all complaiſance and ſweetneſs on that of the bride: — their whole deportment to each other was ſuch, as gave the moſt promiſing expectations of a laſting harmony between them, and gladened the hearts of as many as ſaw it, and intereſted themſelves in the felicity of either of them.

They continued but a few days in the retirement, which had been made choice of for the conſummation of their nuptials: — mr. Munden was naturally gay, — loved company, and all the modiſh diverſions of the times: — and his wife, who, as the whole courſe of this hiſtory has ſhewn, had been always fond of them to an exceſs, and whoſe humour, in this point, was very little altered by the change

of

of her condition, readily embraced the firſt propoſal he made of returning to town, believing ſhe ſhould now have courage enough to appear in public, without teſtifying any of that ſhamefacedneſs on account of her marriage, which ſhe knew would ſubject her to the ridicule of thoſe of her acquaintance, who had a greater ſhare of aſſurance.

For a time this new married pair ſeemed to have no other thing in view than pleaſure: — mr. Munden had a numerous acquaintance, — his wife not a few; — giving and receiving entertainments, as yet engroſſed their whole attention; — each ſmiling hour brought with it ſome freſh matter for ſatisfaction, and all was chearful, gay, and jocund.

But this was a golden dream, which could not be expected to be of any long continuance: — the gaudy ſcene vaniſhed at once, and ſoon a darkening gloom overſpread the late enchanting proſpect. — Mr. Munden's fortune could not ſupport theſe conſtant expences; — he was obliged to retrench ſomewhere, and not being of a humour to deny himſelf any of thoſe amuſements he was accuſtomed to abroad, he became exceſſively parſimonious at home, inſomuch that the ſcanty allowance

ance ſhe received from him for houſe-keeping would ſcarce furniſh out a table fit for a gentleman of an eſtate far inferior to that he was in poſſeſſion of, to ſit down to himſelf, much leſs to aſk any friend, who ſhould caſually come in to viſit him, to partake of.

Nothing can be more galling to a woman of any ſpirit, than to ſee herſelf at the head of a family without ſufficient means to ſupport her character, as ſuch, in a handſome manner: — the fair ſubject of this hiſtory had too much generoſity, and indeed too much pride, in her compoſition, to endure that there ſhould be any want in ſo neceſſary an article of life, and as often as ſhe found occaſion, would have recourſe for a ſupply to her own little purſe.

But this was a way of going on, which could not laſt long: — ſhe complained of it to mr. Munden; — but though the remonſtrances ſhe made him were couched in the moſt gentle terms that could be, he could not forbear teſtifying a good deal of diſpleaſure on hearing them; — he told her, that he feared ſhe was a bad œconomiſt, and that as ſhe was a wife, ſhe ought to underſtand, that it was one of the main duties of her place to be frugal

of

of her huſband's money; and be content with ſuch things as were ſuitable to his circumſtances.

The ſurly look with which theſe words were accompanied, as well as the words themſelves, made her eaſily perceive, that all the mighty paſſion he had pretended to have had for her, while in his days of courtſhip, was too weak to enable him to bear the leaſt contradiction from her, now he was become a huſband.

She reſtrained, however, that reſentment, which ſo unexpected a diſcovery of his temper had inſpired her with, from breaking into any violent expreſſions, and only mildly anſwered, that ſhe ſhould always be far from deſiring any thing, which would be of real prejudice to his circumſtances; but added, that ſhe was too well acquainted with his fortune, not to be well aſſured, it would admit of keeping a table much more agreeable to the rank he held in life, and the figure he made in other things.

'I am the beſt judge of that,' replied he, a little diſdainfully; 'and alſo, that 'it is owing to your own want of manage-'ment, that my table is ſo ill ſupplied: '—I would wiſh you therefore to con-

'trive

'trive better for the future, as you may 'depend upon it, that, unleſs my affairs 'take a better turn, I ſhall not be per-'ſwaded to make any addition to my 'domeſtic expences.'

'I could wiſh then, ſir,' cried ſhe, with a little more warmth, 'that hence-'forth you would be your own purveyor; 'for I confeſs myſelf utterly unable to 'maintain a family, like our's, on the 'nigard ſtipend you have allotted for 'that purpoſe.

'No really, madam,' anſwered he, very churliſhly, 'I did not marry, in order to 'make myſelf acquainted with how the 'markets go, and become learned in the 'prices of beef and mutton; — I always 'looked on that as the province of a 'wife, — it is enough for me to diſcharge 'all reaſonable demands on that ſcore; '— and ſince you provoke me to it, I 'muſt tell you, madam,' continued he, 'that what my table wants of being com-'pleat, is robbed from it by the idle ſu-'perfluities you women are ſo fond of, 'and with which, I think, I ought to 'have no manner of concern.'

As ſhe was not able to comprehend the meaning of theſe words, ſhe was extremely aſtoniſhed

aſtoniſhed at them, and in a pretty haſty manner demanded a detail of thoſe ſuperfluities he accuſed her of: — on which, throwing himſelf back in his chair, and looking on her with the moſt careleſs and indifferent air he could aſſume, he replied in theſe terms:

'I know not,' ſaid he, 'what fool it 'was that firſt introduced the article of 'pin-money into marriage-writings, — 'nothing certainly is more idle, ſince a 'woman ought to have nothing apart 'from her huſband; but as it is grown 'into a cuſtom, and I have condeſcended 'to comply with it, you ſhould, I think, 'of your own accord, and without giving 'me the trouble of reminding you of it, 'convert ſome part of it, at leaſt, to 'ſuch uſes as might eaſe me of a burden 'I have indeed no kind of reaſon to be 'loaded with; — as for example,' continued he, 'coffee, — tea, — chocolate, '— with all the appendages belonging to 'them, have no buſineſs to be enrolled 'in the liſt of houſe-keeping expences, 'and conſequently not to be taken out 'of what I allow you for that purpoſe.'

Here he gave over ſpeaking, but the conſternation his wife was in preventing her from making any immediate anſwer, he

he reſumed his diſcourſe: — 'Since we 'are upon this topic, my dear,' ſaid he, 'it will be beſt to tell you at once what 'I expect from you, — it is but one 'thing more, — which is this; — you 'have a man entirely to yourſelf, — I am 'willing he ſhould eat with the family; 'but as to his livery and wages I think it 'highly reaſonable you ſhould be at the 'charge of.'

The innate rage, which, during the whole time he had been talking, ſwell'd her breaſt to almoſt burſting, would now no longer be confined: — 'Good heavens!' cried ſhe, 'to what have I reduced my-'ſelf? — Is this to be a wife? — Is this 'the ſtate of wedlock? — Call it rather 'an Egyptian bondage; — the cruel taſk-'maſters of the Iſraelites could exact no 'more. — Ungrateful man!' purſued ſhe, burſting into tears, 'is this the love, — 'the tenderneſs you vowed?'

Overwhelmed with paſſion, ſhe was capable of uttering no more, but continued walking about the room in a diſordered motion, and all the tokens of the moſt outrageous grief and anger: — he ſate ſilent for ſome time; but at laſt looking ſomewhat more kindly on her than he had done, 'Prithee, my dear,' ſaid he, 'don't

'don't let me ſee you give way to emo-
'tions ſo unbecoming of yourſelf, and
'ſo unjuſt to me; — you ſhall have no
'occaſion to complain of my want of
'love and tenderneſs; — you know what
'my expectations are, and when once I
'have gained my point, you may be ſure,
'for my own ſake, I ſhall do every thing
'ſuitable to it; — I would only have you
'behave with a little prudence for the
'preſent.'

In concluding theſe words, he roſe and took hold of her hand, but approached her with an air ſo cold and indifferent, as was far from attoning, with a woman of her penetration, for the unkindneſs of his late propoſal. — 'No, mr. Munden,' cried ſhe, haughtily, turning from him, 'do
'not imagine I am ſo weak as to expect,
'after what you have ſaid, any thing but
'ill uſage.'

'I have ſaid nothing that I have cauſe
'to repent of,' anſwered he, 'and hope,
'that when this heat is over, you will do
'me the juſtice to think ſo too. — I leave
'you to conſider of it, and bring your-
'ſelf into a better humour againſt my re-
'turn.' — He added no more, but took his hat and ſword, and went out of the room.

She

She attempted not to call him back, but retired to her chamber, in order to give looſe to paſſions more turbulent than ſhe had ever known before.

CHAP. VI.

Contains a ſecond matrimonial conteſt, of worſe conſequence than the former.

WHOEVER conſiders miſs Betſy Thoughtleſs in her maiden character, will not find it difficult to conceive what ſhe now endured in that of mrs. Munden. — All that lightened her poor heart, — all that made her patiently ſubmit to the fate her brothers had, in a manner, forced upon her, was her belief of her being paſſionately beloved by the man ſhe made her huſband; — but thus cruelly undeceived, by the treatment ſhe had juſt met with from him, one may truly ſay, that if it did not make her utterly hate and deſpiſe him, it at leaſt deſtroyed at once, in her, all the reſpect and good-will ſhe had, from the firſt moment of her marriage, been endeavouring to feel for him.

It is hard to ſay, whether her ſurpriſe at an eclairciſſement ſhe had ſo little expected, — her indignation at mr. Munden's mean attempt to encroach upon her right,— or the ſhock of reflecting, that it was by death alone ſhe could be relieved from the vexations which ſhe was threatened with from a man of his humour, were moſt predominant in her ſoul; but certain it is, that all together racked her with moſt terrible revulſions.

She was in the midſt of theſe agitations, when lady Truſty came to viſit her. — In the diſtractions of her thoughts ſhe had forgot to give orders to be denied to all company, which otherwiſe ſhe would, doubtleſs, have done, even without excepting that dear and juſtly valued friend.

She endeavoured, as much as poſſible, to compoſe herſelf, and prevent all tokens of diſcontent from appearing in her countenance, but had not the power of doing it effectually enough, to deceive the penetration of that lady; — ſhe immediately perceived, that ſomething extraordinary had happened to her, and as ſoon as ſhe was ſeated began to enquire into the cauſe of the change ſhe had obſerved in her.

Mrs.

Mrs. Munden, on conſidering what was moſt becoming in a wife, from the firſt moment of her becoming ſo, had abſolutely reſolved always to adhere, as ſtrictly as poſſible, to this maxim of the poet:

'Secrets of marriage ſhould be ſacred held,
'Their ſweets and bitters by the wife conceal'd.'

But finding herſelf pretty ſtrongly preſſed by a lady, to whom ſhe had the greateſt and moſt juſt reaſon to believe ſhe ought to have nothing in reſerve, ſhe heſitated not long to relate to her the whole ſtory of the brulée ſhe had had with her huſband.

Lady Truſty was extremely alarmed at the account given her, and becauſe ſhe would be ſure not to miſtake any part of it, made mrs. Munden repeat ſeveral times over every particular of this unhappy diſpute; — then, after a pauſe of ſome minutes, began to give her advice to her fair friend in the following terms:

'It grieves me to the ſoul,' ſaid that excellent lady, 'to find there is already

'any matter of complaint between you; — you have been but two months married, and it is, methinks, by much too early for him to throw off the lover, and exert the huſband; — but ſince it is ſo, I would not have you, for your ſake, too much exert the wife: — I fear he is of a rugged nature, — it behoves you, therefore, rather to endeavour to ſoften it, by all the means in your power, than to pretend to combat with unequal force; — you know the engagements you are under, and how little relief all the reſiſtance you can make will be able to afford you.'

'Bleſs me, madam!' cried mrs. Munden, ſpirituouſly, 'would your ladyſhip have me give up, to the expence of houſe-keeping, that ſlender pittance allowed for cloaths and pocket-money in my marriage-articles?'

'No, my dear,' cried lady Truſty, 'far be it from me to give you any ſuch counſel; — on the contrary, I am apprehenſive, that if you ſhould ſuffer yourſelf to be either menaced, or cajoled, out of even the ſmalleſt part of your rights, 'tis poſſible that a man of mr. Munden's diſpoſition, might hereafter be tempted to encroach upon the whole,

'whole, and leave you nothing you could 'call your own.'

'It is very difficult, if not wholly im-'poſſible,' continued ſhe, 'to judge, with 'any certainty, how to proceed with a 'perſon, whoſe temper one does not 'know; — I am altogether a ſtranger to 'that of mr. Munden, nor can you as yet 'pretend to be perfectly acquainted with 'it; — all I can ſay, therefore, is, that I 'would have you maintain your own pri-'vileges, without appearing too tenacious 'of them.'

'I have then no other part to take,' ſaid mrs. Munden, 'than juſt to lay out 'in the beſt manner I can what money 'he is pleaſed to allow, without making 'any addition, what accidents ſoever may 'happen to demand it.'

'I mean ſo,' replied lady Truſty, 'and 'whenever there is any deficiency, as ſome 'there muſt neceſſarily be, in what might 'be expected from your way of living, I 'would not have you ſeem to take the 'leaſt notice of it; — behave, as if en-'tirely unconcerned, — contented, and 'eaſy; — leave it to him to complain, 'and when he does ſo, you will have an 'opportunity, by ſhewing the bills of

'what you have laid out, of proving, 'that it is not owing to your want of 'good management, but to the ſcarcity 'of the means put into your hands, that 'his table is ſo ill ſupplied; — but ſtill 'let every thing you urge on this occa-'ſion, be accompanied with all the ſoft-'neſs it is in your power to aſſume.'

To this mrs. Munden, with a deep ſigh, made anſwer, that though ſhe was an ill diſſembler, and beſides had little room, from her huſband's late carriage towards her, to flatter herſelf with any good effect of her ſubmiſſion, yet ſhe would endeavour to follow her ladyſhip's counſel, in making the experiment, however irkſome it might be to her to do ſo.

They had a very long converſation together on this head, during the whole courſe of which lady Truſty laboured all ſhe could to perſwade the other to look on her ſituation in a much leſs diſagreeable light, than in reality it deſerved.

But how little is it in the power of argument to reaſon away pain! — one is much more deeply affected with what one feels than what one hears: — the heart of mrs. Munden was beſet with thorns, which all the words in the world would

would have been ineffectual to remove; — diſappointed in every thing, that could have rendered this marriage ſupportable to her; — her good nature abuſed, — her ſpirit humbled and depreſſed, — no conſiderations were of force to moderate her paſſions, but that melancholy one that as her misfortunes were without a remedy, the beſt, and indeed the only relief, that fate permitted was, in patiently ſubmitting.

She acted, nevertheleſs, in every reſpect for ſeveral days, conformable to the method lady Truſty had preſcribed, and reſtrained her temper ſo, as neither by word or action to give mr. Munden any juſt cauſe of offence; — he alſo kept himſelf within bounds, though it was eaſy for her to perceive, by his ſullen deportment, every time he was at table, how ill he was ſatisfied with the proviſions ſet before him.

A cold civility on the one ſide, and an enforced complaiſance on the other, hindered the mutual diſcontent that reigned in both their hearts from being perceptible to any who came to viſit them, and alſo from breaking into any indecencies between themſelves, 'till one day, a gentleman of ſome conſideration in the world

happening, unexpectedly, to come to dine with them, mr. Munden was extremely ſhocked at being no better prepared for his entertainment.

'What!' my dear,' ſaid he to his wife, 'have you nothing elſe to give us?' —To which ſhe replied, with a great deal of preſence of mind, — 'I am quite 'aſhamed and ſorry for the accident,' 'but you know, my dear, we both 'intended to dine abroad to day, ſo 'I gave a bill of fare accordingly, and 'this gentleman came too late to make 'any addition to what I had ordered.'

It may be eaſily ſuppoſed the gueſt aſſured them, that there needed no apologies, — that every thing was mighty well, and ſuch like words of courſe; ſo no more was ſaid upon this ſubject.

But the pride of mr. Munden filled him with ſo much inward rage and ſpite, that he was ſcarce able to contain himſelf till his friend had taken leave, and he no ſooner was at liberty to ſay what he thought proper, without incurring the cenſure of being unmannerly or unkind, than he began to reproach her in the moſt unjuſt and cruel terms, for having, as he ſaid, expoſed him to the contempt

and

and ridicule of a perſon, who had hitherto held him in the higheſt eſtimation.

She made no other reply, than that ſhe was no leſs confounded than himſelf, at what had happened, — that it was not in her power to prevent it, — that ſhe could wiſh to be always prepared for the reception of any friend, and that ſhe was certain, when he reflected on the cauſe, he would be far from laying any blame on her.

In ſpeaking theſe words, ſhe ran to her cabinet, and as lady Truſty had directed, produced an account to what uſes every ſingle ſhilling ſhe had received from him had been converted, ſince the laſt diſpute they had with each other on this ſcore.

In preſenting the papers to him, — 'Read theſe bills,' ſaid ſhe, 'and be convinced how little I deſerve ſuch treatment from you: — you will find that there are no items inſerted of coffee, tea, or chocolate. — Articles,' — continued ſhe, with an air a little diſdainfully, — 'which you ſeemed to grumble at, tho' yourſelf and friends had the ſame ſhare in, as well as me and mine.'

'Rot your accounts,' cried he, tearing the papers ſhe gave him into a thouſand pieces, — 'have you the folly to imagine 'I will be troubled with ſuch ſtuff? — 'It is ſufficient I know upon the whole 'what ought to be done, and muſt plain- 'ly tell you, once for all, that you ſhould 'rather think of retrenching your ex- 'pences, than flatter yourſelf with ex- 'pecting an increaſe of my allowance to 'you.'

'My expences! — my expences!' re-iterated ſhe, with vehemence, — 'what 'does the man mean?' — 'My mean- 'ing,' anſwered he, ſullenly, 'would 'need no explanation, if you had either 'any love for me, or prudence enough 'to direct you to do what would entitle 'you to mine; — but ſince you are ſo 'ignorant, I muſt tell you, that I think 'my family too much encumbered; — 'you have two maids, — I do not deſire 'you to leſſen the number, but they are 'certainly enough to wait upon you in a 'morning. — I have a man, for whom I 'never have any employment after that 'time, and he may wait at table, and 'attend you the whole afternoon; — I 'ſee therefore no occaſion you have to 'keep a fellow meerly to loiter about the 'houſe,

'houſe, — eat, — drink, and run before 'your chair when you make your viſits, '— I inſiſt, therefore, that you either 'diſcharge him, or conſent to give him 'his livery and wages, and alſo to allow 'for his board out of your own annual 'revenue of pin-money.'

What uſage was this for a young lady, ſcarce yet three months married, — endued with every qualification to create love and eſteem, — accuſtomed to receive nothing but teſtimonies of admiration from as many as beheld her, and addreſſed with the extremeſt homage and tenderneſs, by the very man who now ſeemed to take pride in the power he had obtained of thwarting her humour, and dejecting that ſpirit and vivacity he had ſo lately pretended to adore.

How utterly impoſſible was it for her now to obſerve the rules laid down to her by lady Truſty! — Could ſhe after this ſubmit to put in practice any ſoftening arts ſhe had been adviſed to win her lordly tyrant into temper? — Could ſhe, I ſay, have done this, without being guilty of a meanneſs, which all wives muſt have condemned her for.

But though the anſwers ſhe gave to the propoſal made her by this ungenerous huſband were ſuch as convinced him, ſhe would never be prevailed upon to recede from any part of what was her due by contract, and though ſhe teſtified her reſentment, on his attempting ſuch a thing, in terms haughty enough, yet did ſhe confine herſelf within the limits of decency, not uttering a ſingle word unbecoming of her character, either as the woman of good underſtanding, or the wife.

Mr. Munden's notions of marriage had always been extremely unfavourable to the ladies; — he conſidered a wife no more than an upper ſervant, bound to ſtudy and obey, in all things, the will of him to whom ſhe had given her hand; — and how obſequious and ſubmiſſive ſoever he appeared when a lover, had fixed his reſolution, to render himſelf abſolute maſter when he became a huſband.

On finding himſelf thus diſappointed in his aim, he was almoſt ready to burſt with an inward malice, which not daring to wreak, as perhaps at that time he could have wiſhed, he vented in an action mean and pitiful indeed, but not be wondered at

at in a man poſſeſſed of ſo ſmall a ſhare of affection, juſtice, or good-nature.

The reader may remember, that mr. Trueworth, in the beginning of his courtſhip to miſs Betſy, had made her a preſent of a ſquirrel; — ſhe had ſtill retained this firſt token of love, and always cheriſhed it with an uncommon care; — the little creature was ſitting on the ridge of its cell cracking nuts, which his indulgent miſtreſs had beſtowed upon him; — the fondneſs ſhe had always ſhewn of him put a ſudden thought into mr. Munden's head, he ſtarted from his chair, ſaying to his wife, with a revengeful ſneer, — 'Here 'is one domeſtic, at leaſt, that may be 'ſpared.' — With theſe words he flew to the poor harmleſs animal, ſeized it by the neck, and throwing it with his whole force againſt the carved work of the marble chimney, its tender frame was daſhed to pieces.

All this was done in ſuch an inſtant, that mrs. Munden had not time to make any attempt for preventing it, but on the ſight of ſo diſaſterous a fate befalling her little favourite, and the brutality of him who inflicted it, raiſed emotions in her, which ſhe neither endeavoured, nor at that inſtant could have power to quell.

'Monſter!'

'Monſter!' — cried ſhe; — 'unworthy the name of man; — you needed not have been guilty of this low piece of cruelty, to make me ſee to what a wretch I am ſacrificed.' — 'Nor was there any occaſion for exclamations ſuch as theſe,' replied he, ſcornfully, 'to make me know that I was married to a termagant.'

Many altercations of the like nature paſſed between them, to which mrs. Munden was the firſt that put a period: — finding herſelf unable to reſtrain her tears, and unwilling he ſhould be witneſs of that weakneſs in her, ſhe flew out of the room, ſaying at the ſame time, that ſhe would never eat, or ſleep with him again.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Gives an exact account of what happened in the family of mr. Munden, after the lamentable and deplored death of his lady's favourite ſquirrel, with ſeveral other particulars, much leſs ſignificant, yet very neceſſary to be told.

IF mr. Munden had ſet his whole invention to work, in order to find the means of rendering himſelf hateful in the eyes of his wife, he could not have done it more effectually, than by his ſavage treatment of her beloved ſquirrel; — many circumſtances, indeed, concurred to ſet this action of his in the moſt odious light that could poſſibly be given it.

In the firſt place, the maſſacre of ſo unhurtful a little creature, who never did any thing to provoke its fate, had ſomething in it ſtrangely ſpleenatic and barbarous.

In the next, the bloody and inhuman deed being perpetrated by this injurious huſband, merely in oppoſition to his wife, and becauſe he knew it would give her ſome

ſome ſort of affliction, was ſufficient to convince her, that he took pleaſure in giving pain to her, and alſo made her not doubt, but he would ſtop at nothing for that purpoſe, provided it were ſafe, and came within the letter of the law.

It grieved her to be deprived of a little animal ſhe ſo long had kept, — with whoſe pretty tricks ſhe had ſo often been diverted; and it muſt be confeſſed, that to be deprived of ſo innocent a ſatisfaction, by the very man ſhe had looked upon as bound by all manner of ties to do every thing to pleaſe her, was enough to give the moſt galling reflections to a woman of her delicacy and ſpirit.

But there was ſtill another, and by many degrees a more aggravating motive for her indignation; — if ſhe had purchaſed this ſquirrel with her own money, or if it had been preſented to her by any other hands than thoſe of mr. Trueworth, not only the loſs would have been leſs ſhocking to her, but alſo the perſon, by whom ſhe ſuſtained that loſs, would, perhaps, have found leſs difficulty in obtaining her forgiveneſs.

She kept her promiſe, however, and ordered a bed to be made ready for her in another

another room: — mr. Munden came not home that night, 'till very late; and being told what his wife had done took not the leaſt notice of it, but happening to meet her the next morning, as ſhe was coming down ſtairs, 'So, madam,' ſaid he, 'I ſuppoſe you fancy this obſtinate 'diſobedience to your huſband is mighty 'becoming in you.'

'When a huſband,' anſwered ſhe, 'is 'ignorant of the regard he ought to have 'for his wife, or forgets to put it in prac-'tice, he can expect neither affection nor 'obedience, unleſs the woman he has mar-'ried happens to be an ideot.'

They paſſed each other with theſe words, and ſhe went directly to lady Truſty, being impatient to acquaint her with the behaviour of her huſband towards her ſince ſhe laſt had ſeen her.

This worthy lady was aſtoniſhed beyond meaſure at the recital; —it ſeemed ſo ſtrange to her, that a gentleman of mr. Munden's birth, fortune, and education, ſhould ever entertain the ſordid deſign of obliging his wife, to convert to the family uſes, what had been ſettled on her for her own private expences, that ſhe could not have given credit to it from any

any other mouth than that of the weeping ſufferer: —his killing of the ſquirrel alſo, though a trifle in itſelf, ſhe could not help thinking denoted a moſt cruel, revengeful, and mean mind.

But how much ſoever ſhe condemned him in her heart, ſhe forbore expreſſing the whole of her ſentiments on this occaſion to his wife, being willing, as they were joined to each other, by the moſt ſacred and indiſſoluble bonds, rather to heal, if poſſible, the breach between them, than to add any thing which might ſerve to widen it.

She told her, that though ſhe could not but confeſs, that mr. Munden had behaved towards her, through this whole affair, in a manner very different from what he ought to have done, or what might have been expected from him, yet ſhe was ſorry to find, that ſhe had carried things to that extremity, particularly ſhe blamed her for having quitted his bed; —'becauſe,' ſaid ſhe, 'it may furniſh 'him with ſome matter of complaint 'againſt you, and likewiſe make others 'ſuſpect you have not that affection for 'him, which is the duty of a wife.'

Mrs.

Mrs. Munden making no anſwer to this, and looking a little perplexed, — 'I do not mean, by what I have ſaid,' reſumed lady Truſty, 'to perſwade you 'to make any mean ſteps towards a re-'conciliation: — that is, I would not 'have you confeſs you have been in the 'wrong, or tell him you are ſorry for 'what you have done: — that would be 'taking a blame upon yourſelf you do 'not deſerve, and he would imagine he 'had a right to expect the ſame on every 'trifling occaſion. — It may be, he might 'be imperious and ill-natured enough to 'create quarrels, merely for the ſake of 'humbling your ſpirit and reſentment 'into ſubmiſſions.'

'But as to live in the manner you are 'likely to do together,' continued ſhe, 'cannot but be very diſpleaſing in the 'eye of heaven, and muſt alſo expoſe 'both of you to the cenſure and con-'tempt of the world, when once it comes 'to be known and talked of; ſome means 'muſt be ſpeedily found to bring about 'an accommodation between you.'

'O! madam,' cried the other, haſtily interrupting her, 'how impoſſible is it 'for me ever to look with any thing but 'diſdain

'disdain and resentment, on a man, who 'after so many protestations of eternal 'love, eternal adoration, has dared to 'treat me in this manner! — No,' added she, with greater vehemence than before, 'I despise the low, — the groveling 'mind; — light and darkness are not 'more opposites than we are, and can as 'easily agree.'

'You must not think, nor talk in this 'fashion,' said the good lady: — 'all 'you can accuse him of will not amount 'to a separation; — besides, consider 'how odd a figure a woman makes, who 'lives apart from her husband: — there 'is an absolute necessity for a reconcilia-'tion, and as it is probable, that neither 'of you will pursue any measures for that 'purpose, it is highly proper your friends 'should take upon them to interpose in 'the affair.

It was a considerable time before mrs. Munden could be perswaded, by all the arguments lady Trusty made use of, that either her duty, her interest, or her reputation, required she should forgive the insults she had received, from this ungrateful and unworthy husband.

The

The good lady would not, however, give over till ſhe had prevailed on her not only to liſten to her reaſons, but alſo to be at laſt perfectly convinced by them: — this point being gained, the manner in which the matter ſhould be conducted, was the next thing that employed her thoughts.

It ſeemed beſt to her, that the two mr. Thoughtleſſes ſhould not be made acquainted with any part of what had paſſed, if the buſineſs ſhe ſo much wiſhed to ſee accompliſhed could be effected without their knowledge; — her reaſon for it was this: — they were both men of pretty warm diſpoſitions, eſpecially the younger, and as they had been ſo aſſiduous in promoting this match, ſo early a breach, and the provocations given for it by mr. Munden, might occaſion them to ſhew their reſentment for his behaviour in a faſhion, which would make what was already very bad, much worſe.

'Sir Ralph is a man in years,' ſaid ſhe, — 'has been your guardian, and I am 'apt to believe, that on both theſe ac-'counts his words will have ſome weight 'with mr. Munden: — the friendſhip 'which he knows is between us, will 'alſo

'alſo give me the privilege of adding 'ſomething in my turn; and I hope by 'our joint mediation this quarrel may be 'made up, ſo far at leaſt as that you may 'live civilly together.'

Mrs. Munden made no other reply to what her ladyſhip had ſaid, than to thank her for the intereſt ſhe took in her affairs, and the trouble ſhe was about to give ſir Ralph on her account.

The truth is, this young lady would in her heart have been much better ſatisfied, that there had been a poſſibility of being ſeparated for ever, from a perſon, who, ſhe was now convinced, had neither love nor eſteem for her, rather than to have conſented to cohabit with him as a wife, even though he ſhould be prevailed upon to requeſt it, in the moſt ſeemingly ſubmiſſive terms.

While they were in this converſation a meſſage came from mr. Edward Goodman, containing an invitation to ſir Ralph and lady Truſty, to an entertainment that gentleman had ordered to be prepared the next day for ſeveral of his friends, on a particular occaſion, which, becauſe the reader as yet is wholly ignorant of, it is highly

highly proper he ſhould be made acquainted with.

CHAP. VIII.

Preſents the reader with ſome paſſages, which could not conveniently be told before, and without all doubt have been for a long time impatiently expected.

THE ſpirits of lady Mellaſin had for ſeveral months been kept up by the wicked agents ſhe had employed in the management of the worſt cauſe, that ever was taken in hand: — thoſe ſubtle and moſt infamous wretches, in order to draw freſh ſupplies of money from that unhappy woman, had ſtill found means to elude and baffle all the endeavours of mr. Goodman's honeſt lawyer, to bring the matter to a fair trial.

But at laſt all their diabolical inventions, — their evaſions, — their ſubterfuges failing, and the day appointed, which they knew muſt infallibly bring the whole dark myſtery of iniquity to light, when all their perjuries muſt be explored, and themſelves expoſed to the juſt puniſhment

ment of ſuch flagitious crimes, not one of them had courage to ſtand the dreadful teſt, nor face that awful tribunal they had ſo greatly abuſed.

Yet ſo cruel were they, even to the very woman, all the remains of whoſe ſhattered fortune they had ſhared among them, as not to give her the leaſt warning of her fate. — Nor till the morning, which ſhe was made to hope would decide every thing in her favour, did ſhe know ſhe was undone, deſerted, and left alone to bear the brunt of all the offended laws inflict on forgery.

What words can repreſent the horror, — the confuſion of her guilty mind, when neither the perſon who drew up the pretended will, nor either of thoſe two who had ſet their names as witneſſes appearing, ſhe ſent in ſearch of them, and found they were all removed from their habitations, and fled, no one could inform her where.

Scarce had ſhe time to make her eſcape out of the court, before word was given to an officer to take her into cuſtody; — not daring to go home, nor knowing to whom ſhe could have recourſe for ſhelter in this exigence, ſhe ran like one diſtracted through

through the ſtreets, 'till ſhe came to one of the gates of St. James's park, where meeting with a porter, ſhe ſent him to her lodgings, to order her daughter Flora, and mrs. Prinks, to come that inſtant to her.

Mrs. Prinks immediately obeyed the ſummons, but miſs Flora had the audacity to deſire to be excuſed, being then dreſſing to go on a buſineſs, which indeed ſhe then imagined was of much more conſequence to herſelf than any thing relating to her mother could poſſibly be.

After this diſſolute and unfortunate creature was left by mr. Trueworth, in the manner deſcribed in the third volume of this hiſtory, ſhe gave a looſe to agonies, which only thoſe who have felt the ſame can be capable of conceiving.

Her ſhrieks, and the requeſt mr. Trueworth had made on his going out, brought up the woman of the houſe herſelf, to adminiſter what relief was in her power, to a lady who ſeemed to ſtand in ſo much need of it.

Having prevailed on her to come down ſtairs, ſhe ſeated her in a little room behind the bar, and as ſhe ſaw the violence

of her paſſions threw her into frequent faintings, neglected nothing which ſhe thought might be of ſervice to recover her ſpirits, and compoſe her mind.

As ſhe was thus charitably employed, a young gentleman, who uſed the houſe, and was very free with all belonging to it, happened to come in: — miſs Flora, beſides being handſome, had ſomething extremely agreeable and engaging in her air, and had her heart been poſſeſſed of half that innocence her countenance gave the promiſe of, her character would have been as amiable as it was now the contrary.

There are ſome eyes which ſhine thro' their tears, and are lovely in the midſt of anguiſh: — thoſe of miſs Flora had this advantage, and ſhe appeared, in ſpite of her diſorder, ſo perfectly charming to the ſtranger, that he could not quit the place without joining his endeavours to thoſe of the good natur'd hoſteſs for her conſolation, and had the ſatisfaction to find them much more effectual for that purpoſe.

The afflicted fair one finding herſelf ſomewhat better, thanked the good woman in the politeſt terms for the pains ſhe had been at; but the gentleman would not

not be denied ſeeing her ſafe home in a coach, ſaying, the air on a ſudden might have too violent an effect on her ſo lately recovered ſpirits, and that it was not fit ſhe ſhould be alone in caſe of accidents.

Miſs Flora was eaſily prevailed upon to accept this obliging offer; — he attended her home, — ſtayed about half an hour with her, and entreated ſhe would give him permiſſion to come the next day, and enquire after her health.

She knew the world too well, and the diſpoſition of mankind in general, not to ſee that there was ſomething more than mere compaſſion in the civilities he had ſhewn to her; — ſhe examined his perſon, — his behaviour, and found nothing in either that was not perfectly agreeable; and though ſhe had really loved mr. Trueworth to the greateſt exceſs that woman could do, yet, as ſhe knew he was irrecoverably loſt, ſhe looked upon a new attachment as the only ſure means of putting the paſt out of her head.

A very few viſits ſerved to make an eclairciſſment of the thoughts they mutually had entertained of each other, and as he had found by the woman of the tavern, that the diſtreſs of this young lady had

been occaſioned by a love quarrel with a gentleman, who had brought her into that houſe, he began with expreſſing the utmoſt abhorrence of that injuſtice and ingratitude, which ſome were capable of; —'but,' ſaid he, 'if ſome of us have 'neither love nor honour for thoſe that 'love us, we all certainly love our own 'happineſs, and he muſt be ſtupid and 'inſenſible, indeed,' added he, embracing her with the warmeſt tranſport, 'who 'could not find it eternally within theſe 'arms.'

'You all talk ſo,' anſwered ſhe, with the moſt engaging ſmile ſhe could put on; —'but as my youth, — innocence, — 'and, perhaps, a little mixture of female 'vanity have once miſled me, it behoves 'me to be extremely cautious how the 'tender impulſe gets a ſecond time poſ-'ſeſſion of my heart.'

In fine, ſhe put him not to a too great expence of vows and proteſtations before ſhe either was, or pretended to be convinced of the ſincerity of his paſſion, and alſo rewarded it in as ample a manner as his ſoul could wiſh.

It is certain, that for a time, this new gallant behaved with the extremeſt fondneſs towards

towards her, — did every thing that the moſt ardent lover could do to pleaſe her, — he treated her, — carried her to all public places of entertainment, and what in her preſent circumſtances was moſt neceſſary to her, was continually making her very rich and valuable preſents.

But it could not be expected, that an amour entered into in this manner, and which had no ſolid eſteem on either ſide for its foundation, would be of any long continuance: — the gentleman had a great deal of good nature, but was gay and inconſtant, as the moſt variable of his ſex; — he found a new charm in every new face that preſented itſelf to him, — and as he wanted no requiſites to pleaſe the fair, he too ſeldom failed in his intents upon them.

Miſs Flora was not ignorant, that he had many amuſements of this kind, even while he kept up the moſt tender correſpondence with her; but perceiving, that both reproaches and complaints were equally in vain with a man of his humour, ſhe had the cunning to forbear perſecuting him with either, and by appearing always eaſy, degagée, and unconcerned, preſerved her acquaintance with him, and re-

ceived proofs of his liberality long after ſhe had loſt thoſe of his inclination.

On being told, that he was going on a party of pleaſure into the ſouth of France, ſhe exerciſed all her wit and artifice to engage him to permit her to be one of the company; but he treated this requeſt as a mere bagatelle, — ſaid the thing was utterly impracticable, — that none of the gentlemen took any ladies with them, — ſo he would not have her think of it.

It was in order to take her leave of him, before his departure, that ſhe was going to his lodgings when lady Mellaſin had ſent for her into the park.

The cool reception he had given her ſent her home in a very ill humour, which was greatly heightened by a letter, which ſhe found mrs. Prinks had left for her on the table.

That woman having joined her lady in the park, and conſulted together what was to be done, they took a hackney coach, and drove to an obſcure part of the town, where they hired lodgings in a feigned name, after which mrs. Prinks hurried home, — packed up what cloaths, and other neceſſaries ſhe thought would be immediately

immediately wanted, and after having wrote a ſhort account to miſs Flora of the misfortune that had happened, and given her directions where to come, returned with all haſte to her diſconſolate lady.

CHAP. IX.

Contains the cataſtrophe of lady Mellaſin's and her daughter Flora's adventures, while on this ſide the globe.

WHILE this unhappy little family were in their concealment, each of them ſet her whole wits to work to find ſome means, by which lady Mellaſin might be extricated from that terrible dilemma ſhe had brought herſelf into.

But as this was a thing in its very nature, as affairs had been managed, morally impoſſible to be accompliſhed, all their endeavours for that purpoſe only ſerved to ſhew them the extreme vanity of the attempt, and conſequently to render them more miſerable.

Deſpair at length, and the near proſpect of approaching want, ſo humbled the once haughty ſpirit of lady Mellaſin, that ſhe

reſolved on writing to mr. Edward Goodman, — to make uſe of all her rhetoric to ſooth him into forgiveneſs for the troubles ſhe had occaſioned him, and in fine to petition relief from the very man, whom ſhe had made uſe of the moſt villainous arts to prejudice.

The contents of her letter to that much injured gentleman were as follows:

To Edward Goodman, Eſq;

'Sir,

'Appearances are ſo much againſt me, 'that I ſcarce dare ſay I am innocent, 'though I know myſelf ſo, as to any in-'tention of doing you injuſtice: — I can-'not, however, forbear giving you a 'ſhort ſketch of the impoſition which 'has been practiſed upon me, and in my 'name attempted to be put on you.

'The will, which has occaſioned this 'long conteſt between us, was brought 'me by a perſon, who told me, he had 'drawn it up exactly according to my 'late huſband's inſtructions, the very 'evening before he died; — the ſubſcrib-'ing witneſſes gave me the ſame aſſu-'rance, and alſo added, that mr. Good-'man was ſo well convinced of my inte-

'grity,

'grity, and the wrong he had done me 'by ſuſpecting it, that had he lived only 'to the next morning, he had reſolved 'to ſend for me home, and be reconciled 'to me in the face of the world; — ſo 'that if the thing was a peice of forgery, 'theſe men are only guilty, — I am en-'tirely free from any ſhare in it.

'But as theſe proceedings, which I 'have unhappily been prevailed upon to 'countenance, have given you a great 'deal of trouble and expence, I ſincerely 'aſk your pardon for it: — this is all the 'attonement I can make to heaven for 'offences more immediately my own.

'I am very ſenſible, notwithſtanding, 'that by what I have done, I have not only 'forfeited my claim to ſuch part of the 'effects of mr. Goodman as appertain to 'the widow of an eminent and wealthy 'citizen, but likewiſe all my pretenſions 'to the friendſhip and favour of the per-'ſon he has made his heir; — yet, ſir, 'however guilty I may ſeem to you, or 'how great my faults in reality may have 'been, I cannot help being of opinion, 'that when you remember I was once 'the wife of an uncle, whoſe memory 'you have ſo much cauſe to value, you 'will think the name and character I have

'borne ought to defend me from public 'infamy, pariſh alms, and beggary.

'Reduced as I am, it would ill become 'me to make any ſtipulations, or lay a 'tax on the goodneſs I am neceſſitated to 'implore. — No, ſir; as I can now de- 'mand nothing, ſo alſo I can hope for 'nothing but from your compaſſion and 'generoſity, and to theſe two amiable 'qualities alone ſhall aſcribe whatever 'proviſion you ſhall think fit to make 'for me, out of that abundance I was once 'in full poſſeſſion of.

'I ſhall add no more, than to intreat 'you will conſider, with ſome portion of 'attention and good-nature, on what I 'have lately been, and what I at preſent 'am,

'The moſt unfortunate,

'And moſt forlorn of womankind,

'M. MELLASIN GOODMAN.

'P. S. My daughter Flora, the innocent 'partaker of my griefs and ſufferings, 'will have the honour to deliver this 'to you, and, I hope, return with a 'favourable anſwer.'

Lady

Lady Mellaſin choſe to ſend miſs Flora with this letter, as believing her agreeable perſon and manner of behaviour would have a greater effect on the youthful heart of the perſon it was addreſſed to, than could have been expected from the formal and affected gravity of mrs. Prinks.

It is not unlikely too, but that ſhe might flatter herſelf with the hopes of greater advantages, by her daughter's going in perſon to mr. Goodman's, than thoſe, which her letter had petitioned for: — ſhe had often heard, and read, of men, whoſe reſentment had been ſoftened and melted into tenderneſs, on the appearance of a lovely object: — as the poet ſomewhere or other expreſſes it,

'Beauty, like ice, our footing does betray;
'Who can tread ſure on the ſmooth ſlipp'ry way?'

Miſs Flora herſelf was alſo very far from being diſpleaſed at going on this errand, and as it was not proper for her to dreſs in the manner ſhe would have done, on making a viſit to any other perſon, it coſt her ſome time before her ſetting out, to equip herſelf in ſuch a deſhabillee, as

ſhe thought would be moſt genteel and become her beſt.

She had the good fortune to find mr. Goodman at home, and was immediately introduced to him; — he was a little ſurprized at a viſit made him by a young lady, whom he had never ſeen before, but not enough to prevent him from receiving her with the utmoſt complaiſance; — he ſaluted her, — ſeated her in a chair, and then aſked, what commands ſhe had to favour him with: — on which taking out the letter, and giving it to him; — 'This, ſir,' ſaid ſhe, with a deep ſigh, 'will inform you of the requeſt that 'brings me here.'

Mr. Goodman read it haſtily over; but while he was doing ſo, could not forbear ſhaking his head ſeveral times, but ſpoke nothing, 'till after a pauſe of ſome minutes, 'Madam,' ſaid he, 'as this is a bu-'ſineſs, which I could not expect to have 'heard of, I muſt confeſs myſelf alto-'gether unprepared how to proceed in 'it. — If lady Mellaſin,' added he, 'will 'give herſelf the trouble to ſend in three 'or four days, ſhe may depend on an 'anſwer from me.'

The

The coldneſs of theſe words, and the diſtant air he aſſumed while ſpeaking them, ſo widely different from that with which he had accoſted this lady on her firſt entrance, made her preſently ſee, ſhe had nothing to hope from this embaſſy, on her own account, and made her alſo tremble for that of her mother.

As he urged her not to ſtay, nor even gave the leaſt hint, that he was deſirous of her doing ſo, ſhe roſe, and with a moſt dejected air took her leave, telling him, in going out, that ſhe ſhould not fail of acquainting lady Mellaſin with his commands, who, ſhe doubted not, would be punctual in obeying them.

Mr. Goodman was, indeed, too well acquainted with the character of miſs Flora to be capable of receiving any impreſſion from the charms nature had beſtowed upon her, even though they had been a thouſand times more brilliant, than in effect they were, and ſhe had not been the daughter of a woman, who had rendered herſelf ſo juſtly hateful to him.

Lady Mellaſin was ſhocked to the very ſoul, at being told the reception her daughter had met with, and could not help

help looking upon it as a very bad omen of her future ſucceſs; — ſhe doubted not but by his ſaying, that he muſt have time for deliberation, he meant, that he would do nothing in this point without having firſt conſulted his friends, and ſhe had no reaſon to expect, that any of thoſe he converſed with would give council in her favour.

To be reduced from a ſtate of opulence and reſpect, to one of poverty, contempt, and wretchedneſs, is terrible indeed; but much more ſo, when accompanied with a conſciouſneſs of having deſerved by our vices, and ill conduct, all the misfortunes we complain of.

Lady Mellaſin having no pleaſing reflection of having done her duty in any one point in life, it would not have been ſtrange, that thus deſtitute of all comfort from within, all ſuccour from without, if ſhe had yielded herſelf to the laſt deſpair.

She, nevertheleſs, amidſt all the diſtraction of her thoughts, ſtill continued to teſtify a reſolution, ſeldom to be found among women of her abandoned principles, never departing from this maxim, that in the worſt of events nothing was to be neglected: — on the third day ſhe ſent mrs. Prinks

Prinks to wait on mr. Goodman for his anſwer, having experienced the little effect her daughter's preſence had produced.

It is a thing well worth the obſervation of all degrees of people, that the truly generous never keep long in ſuſpence the perſons they think proper objects of their bounty. — A favour that coſts too much pains in obtaining, loſes great part of its value; — it palls upon the mind of the receiver, and looks more like being extorted than beſtowed.

Mr. Cowley, though a man, whoſe great merit one would think ſhould have ſet him above the neceſſity of making any requeſt of a pecuniary nature, was certainly obliged ſometimes to ſollicitations that were very uneaſy to him, and drew from him this emphatic exclamation,

'If there's a man, ye gods, I ought to
'hate,
'Attendance and dependance be his
'fate.'

It ſoon occurred to mr. Goodman in what manner it would beſt become him to act towards this unhappy woman, and alſo what conditions ought to be ſtipulated on her part; he had been told, both by the

the lawyer, and the two mr. Thoughtleſſes, that it was his late uncle's intention, that ſhe ſhould not be left without a decent proviſion, and being willing to conform, as much as poſſible, to all the deſires of a perſon, whom he had always eſteemed as a parent, he paſſed by the injury which ſince his death ſhe had attempted to do to himſelf, and within the time he had mentioned to miſs Flora, wrote an anſwer to her requeſt, in the following terms:

To lady MELLASIN GOODMAN.

'MADAM,

'THOUGH you cannot but be ſenſible, that your late baſe attempt to invalidate my dear uncle's will, excludes you from receiving any benefit from it, yet as I am determined, as far as in my power, to make the example of that excellent man the rule of all my actions, I ſhall not carry my reſentment for the injuſtice you have done me, beyond what he expreſſed for thoſe much greater injuries he ſuſtained, by your infidelity and ungratitude: — it was not his intention you ſhould ſtarve, nor is it my deſire you ſhould do ſo.

'I am willing, madam, to allow you a penſion of one hundred pounds per Ann.

'to

'to be quarterly paid into whoſe hands 'ſoever you ſhall think fit to appoint for 'that purpoſe; — but it muſt be on con-'dition, that you retire forthwith, and 'paſs the whole remainder of your days 'in ſome remote part of the kingdom: '— the farther you remove from a town, 'where your ill conduct has rendered you 'ſo obnoxious, the better.

'This, madam, is what I inſiſt upon, 'and is indeed no more than what your 'own ſafety demands from you: — a 'very ſtrict ſearch is making after your 'accomplices, and if they, or any of 'them, ſhall happen to be found, it will 'be in vain for you to flatter yourſelf 'with eſcaping that puniſhment, which 'the offended laws inflict on crimes of 'this nature; — nor would it be in my 'power to ſhield you from that fate, 'which even the meaneſt and moſt ab-'ject of thoſe concerned with you muſt 'ſuffer.

'As I ſhould be extremely ſorry to 'ſee this, I beg you, for your own ſake, 'to be ſpeedy in your reſolution, which, 'as ſoon as you inform me of, I ſhall 'act accordingly. — I am,

'Yours, &c.

'E. GOODMAN.'

This he ordered to be delivered to any one, who ſhould ſay they came from lady Mellaſin, and mrs. Prinks accordingly received it.

Lady Mellaſin, in the miſerable circumſtances to which ſhe had reduced herſelf, was tranſported to find ſhe ſhould not be entirely left without ſupport: — as for her being obliged to quit London, ſhe was not in the leaſt ſhocked at it, as there was no poſſibility for her ever to appear publicly in it, and ſhe was rather deſirous than averſe to be out of a place, which could no longer afford her thoſe pleaſures and amuſements, ſhe had once ſo much indulged herſelf in the enjoyment of.

But when ſhe conſidered on her baniſhment, and ran over in her mind, what part of England ſhe ſhould make choice of for her aſylum, the whole kingdom appeared a deſert to her, when driven from the gaieties of the court and capital; — ſhe, therefore, reſolved to go farther, and enter into a new ſcene of life, which might be more likely to obliterate the memory of the former; — ſhe had heard much talk of Jamaica, — that it was a rich and opulent place, — that the inhabitants thought of little elſe, but how

to

to divert themſelves in the beſt manner the country afforded; and that they were not too ſtrict in their notions, either as to honour or religion; — that reputation was a thing little regarded among them; — ſo that in caſe the occaſion which had brought her thither ſhould happen to be diſcovered, ſhe would not find herſelf in the leſs eſtimation.

She therefore heſitated not to write a ſecond letter to mr. Goodman, acquainting him with her deſire of going to that plantation, and hinting to him, that, as it would be giving him too great a trouble to remit the quarterly payments he mentioned, ſhe ſhould take it as a particular favour, if he would be pleaſed to beſtow on her ſuch a ſum as he ſhould think proper, in lieu of the annuity he had offered.

Mr. Goodman was extremely pleaſed with this propoſal, and ſeveral letters having paſſed between them, concerning the conditions, he agreed to give her two hundred pounds in ſpecie, to provide herſelf with ſufficient neceſſaries for the voyage, and eight hundred more to be depoſited in the hands of the captain of the ſhip, to be paid her on her arrival, with which ſhe appeared very well ſatisfied,

and

and gave him the moſt ſolemn aſſurances never to trouble him again.

But miſs Flora was all diſtraction at this event:—the thoughts of leaving dear London were equally irkſome to her with thoſe of death itſelf: — fain would ſhe have ſtayed behind; but what could ſhe do? — without reputation, — without friends, — without money, — there was no remedy but to ſhare her mother's fortune; — mrs. Prinks alſo, who, by living ſo long with lady Mellaſin, — known to be in all her ſecrets, and agent in her iniquitous proceedings, could have no character to recommend her to any other ſervice, continued with the only perſon ſhe, indeed, was fit to live with, and they all embarked together on board a ſhip that was then ready to ſail.

All mr. Goodman's friends congratulated him on the ſervice he had done his country, in ridding it of three perſons, who, by perverting the talents heaven had beſtowed upon them to the moſt vile purpoſes, were capable of doing the greateſt miſchiefs to the more innocent and unwary. It was on this occaſion, that he made the invitation before mentioned.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Returns to the affairs of mrs. Munden.

THERE were preſent at the entertainment made by mr. Goodman, ſeveral other of his friends, beſides ſir Ralph and lady Truſty, — the two mr. Thoughtleſſes, and mrs. Munden : — the huſband of that lady had alſo received an invitation to be one of the gueſts, but he pretended a previous engagement would not permit him to accept the favour intended him.

He made his excuſe, however, in terms ſo polite, and ſeemingly ſincere, that none of the company, excepting thoſe, who were in the ſecret of the diſagreement between him and his wife, had any apprehenſions that his abſence was occaſioned by any other motive, than what his meſſage had expreſſed.

Sir Ralph Truſty and his lady, who were the only perſons who had the leaſt ſuſpicion of the truth of this affair, could not help being a good deal concerned at it; but they forbore taking any notice 'till

till the latter, perceiving mrs. Munden had retired to a window at the further end of the room, in order to give herſelf a little air, ſtept haſtily towards her, and in a low voice accoſted her in theſe terms:

'I ſee plainly, my dear,' ſaid ſhe, 'through the excuſe your huſband has 'made for not complying with mr. Good-'man's invitation, and am heartily ſorry 'to find this freſh proof of the diſunion 'between you; — it is high time ſome-: thing ſhould be attempted to put things 'on a better footing, — I will deſire ſir 'Ralph to ſend for mr. Munden to-'morrow, and we will try what can be 'done.'

'Your ladyſhip is extremely good,' replied the other, 'and I ſhall be always 'ready to ſubmit to whatever you ſhall 'think proper for me; — but I am de-'termined to be entirely paſſive in this 'affair, and ſhall continue to live with 'mr. Munden in the ſame manner I do 'at preſent, till a very great alteration in 'his behaviour ſhall oblige me to think I 'ought, in gratitude, to make ſome 'change in mine.'

Lady Truſty would not prolong the converſation for fear of being obſerved, and

and they both rejoined the company. — After this there paſſed nothing of ſufficient moment to acquaint the reader with, ſo I ſhall only ſay, that after a day, and great part of the enſuing night ſpent in feaſting, merriment, and all that could exhilerate the ſpirits, and excite good humour, every one retired to their reſpective dwellings, highly ſatisfied with the manner in which they had been entertained by the young merchant.

Lady Truſty was far from being forgetful of the promiſe ſhe had made to her fair friend, and after a ſerious conſultation with ſir Ralph, in what manner it was moſt proper to proceed, prevailed upon that gentleman, who was little leſs zealous than herſelf in doing good offices, to write the following billet to mr. Munden:

To GEORGE MUNDEN, Eſq;

'SIR,

'A Buſineſs, which I am perfectly well 'aſſured is of the utmoſt conſequence 'both to your preſent and future happi- 'neſs, obliges me to intreat the favour 'of ſeeing you this morning at my houſe, 'it not being ſo proper, for reaſons I

'ſhall

'ſhall hereafter inform you of, for me to 'wait on you at your's.

'As I have no other intereſt in what I 'have to impart, than merely the plea-'ſure I ſhall take in doing you a ſervice, 'and diſcharging what I think the duty 'of every honeſt man, I flatter myſelf 'you will not fail of complying immedi-'ately with my requeſt, and, at the ſame 'time, believe me to be, what I am,

'With the greateſt ſincerity,

'SIR,

'Your well wiſher,

'And moſt humble,

'And moſt obedient ſervant,

'RALPH TRUSTY.'

This letter being ſent pretty early in the morning, mr. Munden was but juſt out of bed when he received it:—a breakfaſt much leſs pleaſing to him than his chocolate;—he doubted not but his wife had made lady Truſty acquainted with the whole ſecret of his family affairs, and therefore eaſily gueſſed on what ſcore he was ſent for in this preſſing manner by ſir Ralph; and as it was highly diſagreeable

to

to him to enter into any diſcuſſions on that head, it was ſome time before he could reſolve within himſelf what anſwer he ſhould ſend.

But whatever deficiencies there might be in this gentleman, none, excepting thoſe of his own family, to whom he did not think it worth his while to be complaiſant, could ever accuſe him of want of politeneſs. — A character ſo dear to him, that, perhaps, he would not have forfeited it, even for the attainment of any other of the more ſhining and valuable virtues of his ſex.

Perplexing, therefore, as he knew this interview muſt neceſſarily be to him, he could not think of behaving in an uncourtly manner to a gentleman of ſir Ralph Truſty's rank and fortune; and having ordered that the ſervant, who brought the letter, ſhould come up, deſired him, in the moſt affable terms, to acquaint his maſter, that nothing ſhould deprive him of the honour of attending him the moment he was dreſſed.

Sir Ralph Truſty in his younger years had lived very much in London, — had kept the beſt company in it, and though he was perfectly ſincere in his nature, and

had a thorough contempt for all thoſe idle ſuperfluous ceremonies, which ſome people look upon as the height of good breeding, and value themſelves ſo much upon, yet he knew how to put them in practice whenever he found they would facilitate any point he had to gain; and as mr. Munden was altogether the courtier in his behaviour, he thought it beſt to addreſs him in his own way, and receive him rather in a manner as if he was about to praiſe him for ſome laudable action he had done, than make any remonſtrances to him, on a conduct, which he wanted to convince him required ſome amendment.

After having ſaid a great many obliging things to him, in order to bring him into a humour proper for his purpoſe, the politic old baronet began in theſe terms to open the buſineſs, on which he had deſired to ſpeak with him.

'I have not words to make you ſen-
'ſible,' continued he, 'how much your
'abſence was regretted yeſterday by all
'the company at mr. Goodman's, eſpe-
'cially by the two mr. Thoughtleſſes,
'who, indeed, on all occaſions, expreſs
'the higheſt eſteem and regard for you,
'both as a friend and brother; but I was
'more

'more particularly affected, when, on 'coming home, my wife acquainted me 'with what ſhe imagined the real cauſe 'that deprived us of you.

'She told me,' added he, 'that having 'the other day ſurpriſed mrs. Munden in 'tears and great confuſion, ſhe would not 'leave her till ſhe wreſted from her a ſe-'cret, which I am equally aſhamed and 'ſorry to repeat, but which you can be 'at no loſs to gueſs at.'

Though mr. Munden had foreſeen on what account he was ſent for, and had prepared himſelf for it, yet he could not forbear teſtifying ſome confuſion; but recovering himſelf from it as ſoon as he could, — 'Yes, ſir Ralph, I eaſily per-'ceive,' anſwered he, 'that my wife has 'been making ſome complaints againſt 'me to your lady, which, doubtleſs, have 'laid me under her diſpleaſure, as I know 'the accuſer has the advantage of the ac-'cuſed, in the opinion of thoſe to whom 'they appeal.'

'Not at all,' cried ſir Ralph, haſtily, 'I dare anſwer, that my wife is no leſs 'concerned for your ſake, than for that 'of mrs. Munden, at the unfortunate diſ-

'greement that has happened between 'you.'

As he was ſpeaking theſe words, lady Truſty, either by deſign or accident, paſs'd by the door of the room where they were ſitting. — 'Come in, my dear,' ſaid ſir Ralph to her, 'and juſtify yourſelf from 'being ſwayed againſt right reaſon, by 'any partial affection to your fair friend.'

'If you mean in the caſe of mrs. Mun-'den, as I ſuppoſe you do,' replied ſhe, 'I can acquit myſelf with very great eaſe 'from any imputation on that ſcore, and 'am ready even before her huſband to 'give it as my judgment, that in all diſ-'putes between perſons, who are married 'to each other, eſpecially when carried 'to any height, neither of them are wholly 'faultleſs; for, though one may be the 'firſt aggreſſor, the other ſeldom, if ever, 'behaves ſo as not to incur ſome part of 'the blame.'

'Your ladyſhip is all goodneſs,' ſaid mr. Munden, very reſpectfully, 'and in 'what you have ſaid, diſcover not only 'a penetration, but alſo a love of juſtice, 'which can never be too much admired 'and applauded. — What your ladyſhip 'has obſerved between me and mrs. Mun-

'den,

'den, is exactly the thing; — it is cer-
'tain, that both of us have been to blame:
'— I have, perhaps, acted in a manner
'ſomewhat too abruptly towards her, and
'ſhe in one too reſentful, and too im-
'perious towards me; and though I am
'willing to allow my dear Betſy all the
'merit of thoſe good qualities ſhe is poſ-
'ſeſſed of, yet I cannot help giving her
'ſome part of the character mr. Con-
'greve aſcribes to Zara in his Mourning
'Bride, and ſaying,

"That ſhe has paſſion, which outſtrip
"the winds,
"And root her reaſon up.'

Lady Truſty, who, for the ſake of mrs. Munden's reputation, was ſo eager to patch up a reconciliation at any rate between her and her huſband, would not ſeem to defend her behaviour as a wife, while ſhe gently accuſed him of having too far exerted the authority of a huſband.

In a word, both ſir Ralph, and his lady, managed in ſo artful a manner, ſtill blending cajolings with remonſtrances, that when they came to enter into a diſcuſſion on this affair, that mr. Munden, whatever he thought in his heart, could

not forbear ſeeming to yield to the juſtice of their reaſonings.'

He conſented, though not without ſome ſcruples, and a much greater ſhare of inward reluctance, than his complaiſance would permit him to make ſhew of, to add one guinea per week to his allowance for the expences of his table. — As to the reſt, he readily enough agreed to meet his wife half way towards a reconciliation, — aſſured them, that he was far from requiring any other ſubmiſſion on her part, than what he would ſet her the example of in himſelf, and that he wiſhed nothing more than to exchange forgiveneſs with her.

On this, lady Truſty diſpatched a ſervant directly to mrs. Munden, to let her know ſhe muſt needs ſpeak with her immediately; — which ſummons was no ſooner delivered, than complied with.

This prudent lady having caſt about in her mind all that was proper to be done, in order to accompliſh the good work ſhe laboured for, and had ſo much at heart, would not leave it in the power of chance to diſappoint what ſhe had ſo happily begun, and having prevailed over the ill-nature and ſourneſs of the huſband, thought it equally neceſſary to prevent the reſentment,

reſentment, or inadvertency of the wife, from fruſtrating her endeavours.

On being told mrs. Munden was come, ſhe ran down ſtairs to receive her, — led her into a parlour, and informed her, as briefly as ſhe could, all that part, which ſhe thought would be moſt ſatisfactory to her, of the converſation which had paſſed between them and mr. Munden, on her ſcore.

Finding what ſhe ſaid was received by the other more coolly than ſhe wiſhed, ſhe took that privilege, which her rank, her age, and the friendſhip ſhe had always ſhewn to her, might juſtly claim, to remonſtrate to her, that it did not become her ſituation and character to ſtand too much upon punctilio's at this time; — that all, that either was, or ought to be dear to womankind, depended on a ſpeedy accommodation with her huſband; — 'The unhappy brulée,' ſaid ſhe, 'has 'laſted too long,—your ſervants muſt cer-'tainly know it, — you cannot be aſſured 'of their ſecrecy, — the whole affair, 'perhaps with large additions to it, will 'ſoon become the talk of the town, — 'every one will be deſcanting upon it, 'and how much ſoever mr. Munden may

'be in fault, you cannot hope to eſcape 'your ſhare in the cenſure.'

Poor mrs. Munden, who looked upon this lady as a ſecond mother, would not attempt to offer any thing in oppoſition to the arguments ſhe uſed; and, beſides, could not forbear avowing within herſelf the juſtice of them. — 'Well, madam,' anſwered ſhe, with a deep ſigh, 'I ſhall 'endeavour to follow your ladyſhip's ad-'vice, — and, ſince I am a wife, will do 'my beſt to make the yoke, I have ſub-'mitted to, ſit as lightly upon me as poſ-'ſible.

Lady Truſty perceiving her ſpirits were very much depreſſed, omitted nothing, that the ſhortneſs of time would allow, to perſwade her to believe, that her condition was not ſo unhappy, in reality, as ſhe at preſent imagined it to be; and having brought her to ſomewhat of a more chearful temper, conducted her into the room where ſir Ralph and mr. Munden were ſtill diſcourſing on the matter in queſtion.

'Welcome, my fair charge,' cried the former, taking her by the hand, and drawing her towards mr. Munden, — 'I have 'once already had the honour of giving 'you to this gentleman, permit me to 'do

'do ſo a ſecond time; — I hope, with 'the ſame ſatisfaction on both ſides, as 'at firſt.'

'On mine, by heaven it is,' replied mr. Munden, flying haſtily to embrace her, as ſhe moved ſlowly forward; — 'if 'my deareſt Betſy will promiſe to forget 'what is paſt, the pains I have ſuffered, 'during this interruption of my happi-'pineſs, will be a ſufficient ſecurity for 'her, that I ſhall be very careful for the 'future, to avoid doing any thing that 'may again ſubject me to the like mis-'fortune.'

Theſe words, and the tender air which he aſſumed in ſpeaking them, were ſo much beyond what mrs. Munden could have expected from him, after his late treatment of her, that all her pride, her anger, and even her indifference, ſubſided at that inſtant, and gave place to ſentiments of the moſt gentle nature.

'You muſt believe,' anſwered ſhe, with an infinity of ſweetneſs in her voice and eyes, 'that I have alſo had my ſhare 'of anguiſh; but whatever inquietudes 'you have ſuſtained on my account muſt 'be forgotten on your part, as it ſhall be 'be mine to make attonement for them,

'by every thing in my power, which can 'flatter me with the hopes of doing ſo.

Inſenſible and moroſe as mr. Munden was, he could not avoid, on this obliging behaviour in his fair wife, being touched in reality with ſome ſoft emotions, which he ſo well knew how to magnify the appearance of, that not only herſelf, but the by-ſtanders, imagined he was the moſt tranſported man alive.

Impoſſible is it to expreſs how much ſir Ralph, and his good lady, rejoiced to ſee this happy event: — they entertained them very elegantly at dinner, — in the afternoon they went all together to take the air in Kenſington gardens, — and a great deal of company coming in the evening to viſit lady Truſty, every thing contributed to keep up the ſpirit and good humour of the newly re-united pair.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Contains only ſome few particulars which followed the reconciliation.

THOUGH this reconciliation was not altogether ſincere on the ſide of mr. Munden, yet being made in the preſence of ſir Ralph and lady Truſty, it kept him from giving any flagrant demonſtrations at preſent, that it was not ſo, and he continued to live with his amiable wife in the moſt ſeeming good harmony for ſome time.

She, on her part, performed, with the utmoſt exactitude all ſhe had promiſed to him, and though ſhe could not be ſaid to feel for him all that warmth of affection, which renders the diſcharge of our duty ſo great a pleaſure to ourſelves, yet her good nature and good ſenſe well ſupplied that deficiency, and left him no room to accuſe her of the leaſt failure in what might be expected from the beſt of wives.

During this interval of tranquility, ſhe loſt the ſociety of two perſons, the tenderneſs of whoſe friendſhip for her ſhe had

experienced in a thouſand inſtances: — — mr. Francis Thoughtleſs, who had ſtayed ſo long in town, merely through the indulgence of his commanding officer, was now obliged to repair to his regiment then quartered at Leeds in Yorkſhire, and ſir Ralph Truſty having finiſhed his affairs in town, his lady returned with him to their country ſeat.

Thus was ſhe almoſt at once deprived of the only two perſons, to whom ſhe could impart her mind without reſerve, or on whoſe advice ſhe could depend in any exigence whatever; for as to her elder brother, he was too eager in the purſuit of his pleaſures, and too much abſorb'd in them, to be truly ſollicitous for any thing that did not immediately relate to them; — ſhe ſaw him but ſeldom, and when ſhe did ſo, there was a certain diſtance in his behaviour towards her, which would not permit her to talk to him with that freedom ſhe could have wiſhed to do.

She had not, however, any freſh motive to regret their departure on this account; — mr. Munden continued to behave to her in much the ſame manner as he had done ſince the breach had been made up between them; — he was, indeed, very much abroad, but as ſhe was far

far from being paſſionately fond of him, and only deſired he would treat her civilly when with her, the little ſhe enjoyed of his company was no manner of affliction to her.

She ſtill retained ſome part of that gaiety and love of a variety of converſation, which had always been a predominant propenſity in her nature, and though in all her excurſions, and the liberties ſhe took, ſhe carefully avoided every thing that might taint her virtue, or even caſt a blemiſh on her reputation, yet were they ſuch, as a huſband, who had loved with more ardency, would not, perhaps, have been very eaſy under: — on his part alſo, the late hours he came home at, — the meſſages and letters, which were daily brought to him by porters, might have given much diſquiet to a wife, not defended from jealouſy by ſo great a ſhare of indifference; — but in this they were perfectly agreed, — neither offered to interfere with the amuſements of the other, nor even pretended to enquire into the nature of them.

Though this was a mode of living together, which was far from being capable of producing that happineſs, for which the ſtate of marriage was ordained; yet

was

was it perfectly eaſy to perſons who had ſo little real affection for each other, and however blamable in the eyes of the truly diſcreet, eſcaped the cenſure of the generality of mankind, by its being ſo frequently practiſed.

But I ſhall not expatiate on their preſent manner of behaviour to each other, ſince it was not of any long continuance, but proceed to the recital of a little adventure, which, tho' it may ſeem trifling to the reader in the repetition, will hereafter be found of ſome conſequence.

It was a mighty cuſtom with lady Mellaſin and miſs Flora, when they had nothing of more conſequence to entertain them, to go among the ſhops, and amuſe themſelves with enquiring after new faſhions, and looking over that variety of merchandize, which is daily brought to this great mart of vanity and luxury.

Mrs. Munden, while in a virgin ſtate, and a boarder at mr. Goodman's, uſed frequently to accompany thoſe ladies, when bent on ſuch ſort of rambles, and ſhe ſtill was fond enough of ſatisfying her curioſity this way, at ſuch times as ſhe found nothing elſe to do, or was not in a humour to give, or receive viſits.

Happening

Happening one day to paſs by the well-furniſhed ſhop of an eminent mercer, and ſeeing ſeveral ſilks lye ſpread upon the counter, ſhe was tempted to ſtep in, and examine them more nearly. A great number of others were alſo taken from the ſhelves, and laid before her; but ſhe not ſeeming to approve any of them, the mercer told her he had ſome curious pieces out of the loom that morning of a quite new pattern, which he had ſent his man with to a lady of quality, and expected he would be back in a few minutes, ſo intreated ſhe would be pleaſed either to ſtay a little, or give him directions where ſhe might be waited upon.

Mrs. Munden complied with the former of theſe requeſts, and the rather becauſe, while they were talking, ſhe heard from a parlour behind the ſhop a harpſichord very finely touched, accompanied with a female voice, which ſung in the moſt harmonious accents, part of this air, compoſed by the celebrated ſignior Bononcini:

" M'inſegna l'amor l'inganno,
" Mi togl'al cor, l'affanno,
" Mi da l'ardir amor,
" Mi da l'ardir amor."

The

The attention mrs. Munden gave to the muſick, preventing her from ſpeaking, the mercer ſaid he was ſorry ſhe was obliged to wait ſo long; — " I rather " ought to thank you ſir, for detaining " me, ſince I have here an entertainment " more elegant than I could have ex- " pected elſewhere."

" The lady ſings and plays well in- " deed, madam," ſaid he; " ſhe is a " cuſtomer of mine, and ſometimes does " my wife the favour of paſſing an hour " with her,"

The lady ſtill continued playing, and mrs. Munden expreſſing a more than ordinary pleaſure in hearing her, the complaiſant mercer asked her to walk into the parlour; to which ſhe replied, ſhe would gladly accept his offer, provided it would be no intruſion; he aſſured her it would not be accounted ſo in the leaſt, and with theſe words conducted her into the room.

A few words ſerved to introduce her to his wife, who being a very genteel, pretty ſort of a woman, received her with great civility; but the fair muſician was no ſooner told the effect her accents had produced on mrs Munden, than tho' ſhe was

a

a foreigner, and ſpoke very broken engliſh, ſhe returned the compliment made her by that lady on the occaſion, in a manner ſo perfectly free, and withal ſo noble, as diſcovered her to have been bred among, and accuſtomed to converſe with perſons in the higheſt ſtations in life.

Vain as mrs. Munden was of her perfections, ſhe was always ready to acknowledge, and admire thoſe ſhe found in others of her ſex. There was ſomething in this lady that attracted her in a peculiar manner; ſhe took as much delight in hearing her talk, as ſhe had done in hearing her ſing; ſhe longed to be of the number of her acquaintance, and made her ſeveral overtures that way, which the other either did not, or would not ſeem to underſtand.

The mercer's man returning with the ſilks his maſter had mentioned, mrs. Munden thought, after the obliging entertainment ſhe had received, ſhe could do no leſs than become a purchaſer of ſomething; accordingly ſhe bought a piece of ſilk for a night-gown, though at that time ſhe had not the leaſt occaſion for it, nor on her coming into the ſhop had any intention to increaſe her wardrobe.

Having

Having now no longer a pretence to ſtay, ſhe gave the mercer directions where to ſend home the ſilk, and then took her leave; but could not do it without telling the lady, that ſhe ſhould think herſelf extremely happy in having the opportunity of a much longer converſation with her.

On her ſpeaking in this manner, the other appeared in very great confuſion; but having, after a pretty long pauſe, a little recovered herſelf, "It is an honour, "madam," ſaid ſhe, "I would be ex- "tremely ambitious of, and had certainly "taken the liberty to requeſt it of you, "if there were not a cruel peculiarity in "in my fate, which deprives me of all "hopes of that, and many other bleſſings "I could wiſh to enjoy.

Mrs. Munden was ſo much ſurprized at theſe words, that ſhe could only reply, ſhe was ſorry a lady, who appeared ſo deſerving, ſhould be denied any thing ſhe thought worthy of deſerving.

It might well indeed ſeem a little ſtrange, that a lady ſo young, beautiful, and accompliſhed, ſhould have any motive to induce her to ſpeak in the terms ſhe

ſhe had done. Mrs. Munden had a good deal of curioſity in her compoſition, ſhe thought there was ſomething extraordinarily myſterious in the circumſtances of this ſtranger, and was very deſirous of penetrating into the ſecret.

About an hour after ſhe came home, the mercer's man brought home the ſilk: ſhe enquired of him the name, condition, and place of abode of the young lady ſhe had ſeen at his maſter's, but received not the leaſt information from him to any of the queſtions ſhe had put to him. He told her, that though ſhe often bought things at their ſhop, yet his maſter always carried them home himſelf, and he was intirely ignorant of every thing relating to her.

This a little vexed her, becauſe ſhe doubted not but that if ſhe once found out her name, quality, and where ſhe lived, her invention would ſupply her with the means of making a more particular diſcovery. She reſolved, therefore, on going again to the ſhop, under the pretence of buying ſomething, and aſking the mercer himſelf, who ſhe could not imagine would have any intereſt in concealing what ſhe deſired to know.

Some

Some company coming in, prevented her from going that afternoon; but ſhe went the next morning after breakfaſt. The mercer not happening to be at home, ſhe was more than once tempted by her impatience to aſk for his wife, and as often reſtrained by the reflection, that ſuch a thing might be looked upon as a piece of impertinence in a perſon ſo much a ſtranger: ſhe left the houſe without ſpeaking to any body but the man ſhe had ſeen the day before.

Her curioſity, however, would not perhaps have ſuffered her to ſtop here, if ſomething of more moment had not fallen out to engage her attention, and put the other out of her head for the preſent.

The nobleman on whom mr. Munden depended for the gift ſo often mentioned in this hiſtory, had been a long time out of town, and was but lately returned. He had heard in the country that mr. Munden was married, and that his wife was very beautiful and accompliſhed.

On mr. munden's going to pay his compliments to him on his arrival, — "I "congratulate you," ſaid he;" — I am told you are married, and have got one of

" of the prettieſt and moſt amiable wo-
" men in London for a wife."

" As to beauty my lord," replied he,"
" there is no certain ſtandard for it, and
" I am intirely of the poet's mind, that

" 'Tis in no face, but in the lover's
" eye."

" But whatever ſhe is," continued he,"
" I am afraid ſhe would be too vain if
" ſhe knew the honour your lordſhip does
" her, in making this favourable mention
" of her."

" Not at all," rejoined the peer,"
" but I ſhall not take her character from
" common fame; — you muſt give me
" leave to be a judge of the perfections
" I have heard ſo much talk of; beſides,
purſued he, " I have a mind to ſee what
" ſort of a houſe you keep; — I think I
" will come ſome day, and take a dinner
" with you."

It is not to be doubted, but that mr. Munden omitted nothing that might aſſure his lordſhip, that it was an honour that he was extremely ambitious of, and ſhould be equally proud of receiving, though

though he durſt not have preſumed to have aſked it.

The very next day being appointed for this grand viſit, he went home to his wife, tranſported with the gracious behaviour of his patron towards him. He threw a large parcel of guineas into her lap, and charged her to ſpare nothing that might entertain their noble gueſt in a manner befitting his high rank, aud the favours he expected one day to receive from him.

Mr. Munden could not have given any commands that would be more pleaſing to his fair wife. — Feaſting and grand company were her delight. She ſet about making the neceſſary preparations with the greateſt alacrity imaginable; and it muſt be acknowledged, that conſidering the ſhortneſs of the time, ſhe had ſufficient to have employed the moſt able and experienced houſewife.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Is only the prelude to greater matters.

IT might juſtly be reckoned a piece of impertinence to take up the reader's time with a repetition of the bill of fare of the entertainment made on the above-mentioned occaſion; it will be ſufficient to ſay, that every thing was extremely elegant; that it was compoſed of the beſt choſen diſhes, which were all ſerved up in the greateſt order; and that there was as great a variety of them as conſiſted with the table of a private gentleman, without incurring the cenſure of profuſeneſs.

Such as it was, however, the noble lord ſeemed highly delighted with it; he praiſed every thing that came before him almoſt to a degree of flattery, and took all opportunities of being yet more laviſh in his encomiums on the beauty, wit, and elegance of the fair provider.

Mr. Munden was tranſported within himſelf at the ſatisfaction his patron expreſſed, and his wife alſo felt a ſecret joy

on

on hearing the fine things ſaid of her, which ſparkled in her eyes, and gave an additional luſtre to all her charms,

This nobleman, though paſt what is called the prime of life, was far from having arrived at thoſe years, which bring on decay; — he was beſides of a ſanguine vigorous complection — had a very graceful perſon — a fine addreſs — a great affluence of wit, and ſomething ſo ſoft and engaging in his manner of behaviour to the ladies, as rendered him ſtill a prodigious favourite with them.

He was too good a judge of what is amiable in womankind, not to diſcover immediately the many perfections mrs. Munden was miſtreſs of; — he felt the whole force of her charms, and as he loved beauty more for his own ſake than for that of the poſſeſſor, and never liked without deſiring to enjoy, his eyes told her at every glance, that he languiſhed for an opportunity of declaring in a different manner the ſentiments he had for her.

Mrs. Munden perfectly underſtood the language in which ſhe found herſelf addreſſed; but had ſhe been leſs learned in it, an explanation ſoon preſented itſelf.

Her

Her huſband ſtepping to the head of the ſtair-caſe to give ſome orders to a ſervant, the peer took hold of one of her hands, and kiſſing it with the utmoſt raptures, 'Divine creature,' cried he, 'how unjuſt is 'fortune, that a face and perſon ſo formed 'for univerſal adoration is not placed in a 'higher, and more conſpicuous ſphere of 'life!'

She had not time to make any reply,—mr. Munden returned that moment;—nor had the noble lord the leaſt opportunity while he ſtayed of ſpeaking one word to her, that was improper for a huſband to be witneſs of.

He prolonged the time of his departure to a greater length than could have been expected from a perſon, whoſe high office in the ſtate permitted him much fewer hours of leiſure, than thoſe in middling ſtations of life are happy enough to enjoy:—when he went away he aſſured both the huſband and the wife, that he quitted them with the utmoſt reluctance, and that he had never paſt a day more agreeably in his whole life.

Mr. Munden was now in ſuch high good humour, that he no ſooner found himſelf alone with his fair wife, than he

took her in his arms, and kiſſed her very heartily: — a favour not common with him ſince the firſt week of their marriage. — He told her moreover ſhe had behaved that day like an angel, — that nothing could be more elegant than the dinner ſhe had prepared, and that he could not have expected ſuch a variety of covers; and ſo fine a deſert for the money he gave her for that purpoſe.

'I think myſelf very happy,' anſwered ſhe, 'that you approve ſo well of my 'management, but I fancy', continued ſhe, with a ſmile, 'you will have ſome better 'opinion of my oeconomy, when I ſhall 'tell you, that it coſt leſs than you ima-'gine.'

'Is it poſſible!' cryed he, in a pleaſing ſurpriſe: 'I rather thought you had 'been kind enough to have added ſome-'what out of your own pocket, to ren-'der the entertainment ſo perfectly com-'pleat.'

'No, I aſſure you,' reſumed ſhe, 'there remains no leſs than theſe three 'guineas of the ſum you allowed me for 'this day's expence.'—With theſe words, ſhe laid the pieces ſhe had mentioned on the table; which he was ſo ungenerous as to take

take immediately up, and put into his own pocket.

'Nay, mr. Munden,' ſaid ſhe, while he was putting up the money,—'this is not 'dealing altogether ſo fairly by me, as I 'have done by you:—I expected, that 'the trouble I have been at, deſerved at 'leaſt to be rewarded with what I have 'ſaved by my frugality.

'Take care, my dear,' replied he laughing, 'how you leſſen the merit of 'what you have done,—I am willing to 'take it as an obligation to me, and ſure 'you value an obligation to me at a 'much higher rate than three pieces.'

Though all this paſſed on both ſides in a jocoſe way, yet as it ſerved to ſhew the niggardlineſs of mr. Munden's temper, cannot be ſuppoſed to have increaſed either the love, or reſpect his wife had for him.

She made however no other anſwer to what he had laſt ſaid, than to tell him that ſhe found he was faſhionable enough to ſuffer virtue to be its own reward, and than turned the converſation, and continued in the ſame chearful humour as before any mention had been made of the three guineas:—Mr. Munden did not go abroad the whole evening, but whether he choſe to ſup at home, for the

pleaſure of enjoying his wife's company, or for the ſake of re-partaking the remainder of thoſe dainties, which had been ſo highly praiſed at dinner, is a point, which perhaps might admit of ſome diſpute.

It is certain, indeed, the yet unſubdued vanity of this young lady, made her feel ſo much innate ſatisfaction in the admiration their noble viſiter had expreſſed of her perſon and accompliſhments, as gave a double ſprightlineſs to her converſation that whole evening, and might perhaps render her more than ordinarily lovely in the eyes of her huſband.

It is very far from being an improbability, that ſome people may be apt to imagine ſhe built a little too much on the veracity of the praiſes beſtowed upon her by that nobleman; but thoſe, who think this way, will be convinced of their error, when they will preſently find how far her conjectures were juſtified in this point.

She was ſitting the next morning in a careleſs poſture at one of the windows that looked into the ſtreet, ruminating ſometimes on one thing, and ſometimes on another; when ſhe could not help obſerving a fellow on the other ſide of the way,

way, who kept walking backwards and forwards before the houſe, which though he frequently paſt thirty or forty paces, yet he took care never to loſe ſight of.

This ſeemed a little odd to her, as ſhe ſat there a conſiderable time, and the man ſtill continued on his poſt:— ſhe doubted not but that he wanted to ſpeak with ſome one or other of her family, but had not the leaſt notion his buſineſs was with herſelf.

Being told breakfaſt waited for her, ſhe went into her dreſſing-room, where ſhe uſually took it, and thought no further of the man, till mr. Munden was dreſſed and gone out, but in leſs than a minute after he was ſo, ſhe received intelligence from her footman, that there was a perſon had a letter for her, and ſaid he would deliver it into no hands but her own.

On this ſhe ran immediately down ſtairs, and found to her great ſurpriſe, that he was no other than the fellow, that ſhe had ſeen loitering ſo long about the houſe.—'I am ordered, madam,' ſaid he, 'to give you this,' and at the ſame time preſented her with a letter:—'From 'whom does it come?' demanded ſhe: 'I 'am ignorant,' anſwered he, 'both of the

'perſon who ſent it, and the buſineſs it 'contains:—my orders were only to de-'liver it into your own hands;' and with theſe words went away with all the ſpeed he could.

It muſt be confeſſed a married woman ought not to have received a letter brought her in this manner, and without knowing whence it came, but curioſity prevailed above diſcretion, and ſhe haſtily opening it, found it contained theſe lines.

To mrs. MUNDEN,

Lovelieſt of your Sex.

"AS not to adore you would be "the greateſt proof of inſenſibili-"ty, ſo not to wiſh, and even attempt "every thing conſiſtent with the cha-"racter of a man of honour, for the "obtaining ſome reward for that adora-"tion, would be the moſt ſtupid piece "of ſelf-denial, becoming only of a "ſtoick, or one no leſs dead to all the "joys of life,—The force of your "charms has made the conqueſt of a "heart, which only waits a favourable "opportunity of throwing itſelf at your "feet, not altogether without hope, "ſpite of the circumſtance you are in, "of being in ſome meaſure acceptable

"to

" to you, — at leaſt it ſhould be ſo, if " the moſt ardent and perfect paſſion that " ever was, joined with the power and " will of rendering you all manner of " ſervices can give it merit in your " eyes."

" A very ſhort time, I flatter myſelf, " will explain to you what at preſent " may ſeem a miſtery: — benignant love " will furniſh the moſt faithful of his " votaries with the means of declaring " himſelf at full, and the flame with " which he is inſpired, inſtruct him alſo " to give you ſuch teſtimonies of his " everlaſting attachment, as the good " underſtanding you are miſtreſs of, will " not permit you to reject: Till when, " I only beſeech you to think with ſome " ſhare of tenderneſs on,'

" Your concealed adorer."

Utterly impoſſible is it to deſcribe the ſituation of mrs. Munden's mind, after having ſeveral times read over this epiſtle, and well examined the purport of it: — ſhe doubted not one moment, but that it was dictated by the noble lord ſhe had ſeen the day before, and whoſe behaviour to her had in ſome degree correſponded with the ſentiments contained in it. — If her vanity was delighted with the conqueſt

ſhe had made; her pride was ſhocked at that aſſurance, which the daring lover ſeemed to flatter himſelf with of gaining her, and her virtue much more allarmed at the attempts, which his rank and fortune might embolden him to make for that end.

At firſt ſhe was reſolved to ſhew the letter to her huſband the moment he came home, and acquaint him with her ſentiments on the matter, that he might take proper precautions to prevent her from being expoſed to any future attacks from this dangerous nobleman.

But on more mature deliberation, her mind changed: — mr. Munden was at preſent in tolerable good humour with her; — ſhe was willing if poſſible to preſerve it in him, and as ſhe could not but think an information of this kind would give him a great deal of uneaſineſs, ſo ſhe had alſo reaſon to apprehend the effects of it might in ſome meaſure, innocent as ſhe was, fall upon herſelf.

He had never yet diſcovered the leaſt emotions of jealouſy, and ſhe knew not what ſuſpicions her having received ſuch a letter from one perſon might raiſe in him

him, in relation to others. — 'He may poſſibly',— ſaid ſhe to herſelf, 'look upon every man that viſits me, as an invader of his right, and conſequently I ſhould be debarred from all converſation with the ſex.'

'Beſides,' continued ſhe, 'I am not certain, that this letter was ſent me by the noble lord, or that he has in reality entertained any deſigns to the prejudice of my virtue; — there is indeed a ſtrong probability of it, even by his behaviour towards me yeſterday; yet it may not be ſo, — appearances often deceive us; and I might take that for the effects of love, which proceeded only from complaiſance; but whatever his intentions are, it would certainly be the extremeſt folly and madneſs in me to enflame mr. Munden againſt a perſon on whom his intereſt ſo much depends.'

'It is no matter therefore', went ſhe ſtill on, 'whether it be the noble lord in queſtion, or any other perſon who preſumes to think ſo meanly of me, as to addreſs me in this audacious manner; it is doubtleſs in my power to keep out of the way of receiving any farther inſults from him; and I am ſufficiently

'capable

'capable myſelf of being the guardian of 'my own honour without diſturbing a 'huſband's peace about it.'

Thus ended the debate ſhe had within herſelf on this occaſion: — ſhe committed the letter to the flames; and reſolved, that if ever the author was hardy enough to diſcover himſelf, to treat him with all the contempt due to him from affronted virtue.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains what every reader of an ordinary capacity, by this time may eaſily gueſs at.

SOME of my readers will doubtleſs think mrs. Munden entirely juſtified in making a ſecret of the above-mentioned letter to her huſband, as ſhe did ſo in regard to his peace; but others again who maintain that there ought to be no reſerve between perſons ſo cloſely united, will condemn her for it; — for my part, I ſhall forbear to give my vote upon the matter; and only ſay, that if ſhe had not acted with leſs prudence ſoon after, ſhe might have ſaved herſelf a very great ſhock, and her huſband much vexation.

It

It was no more than three days after the great man had dined there, that mr. Munden received a billet from him, which contained as follows.

To GEORGE MUNDEN, Eſq;

" Dear Munden,

" I Have ſo few days that I can call my " own, that I am willing to make " thoſe few as happy as I can, and on " that motive deſire your's, and your " amiable wife's company to dinner with " me to-morrow; —I leave you to make " both my requeſt and compliments ac- " ceptable to her, and am,

With all ſincerity,

Dear Munden,

Your's, &c, &c.

* * * *

" P. S. " I ſhall have a female re- " lation with me, who will rejoice in an " opportunity of becoming acquainted " with mrs. Munden."

Mr. Munden deſired the ſervant, who brought this, to give his own and wife's

moſt humble duty to his lord, and aſſure his lordſhip, they would not fail to attend his commands.

Some friends being with him, when this invitation was brought, hindered him from ſaying any thing of it at that time to his wife, but they were no ſooner gone, than with an air and voice elated even to an exceſs, he told her of the high favour conferred upon them by his right honourable patron.

Mrs. Munden was now more than ever convinced of the baſe deſigns lord **** had upon her, and that the letter ſhe had received was ſent by him: — ſhe therefore immediately determined within herſelf to let him ſee, by her not complying with this invitation, that ſhe was neither ignorant what his intentions were, nor would do any thing that might give him the leaſt encouragement to proſecute them.

But as ſhe ſtill judged it was wholly improper to acquaint mr. Munden with any thing of the affair, ſhe could form no other contrivance to avoid accompanying him in this viſit, than by pretending herſelf ſeized with a ſudden indiſpoſition, which ſhe reſolved to do ſome few hours befores

before the arrival of that wherein they ſhould ſet out.

If ſhe had perſiſted in this mind, it would have been highly laudable indeed; — but alas, the next morning inſpired her with very different ſentiments; — vanity, that ſly ſubverter of our beſt reſolutions, ſuggeſted to her, that there was no neceſſity for her behaving in the manner ſhe had deſigned.

'What ſhould I fear?' ſaid ſhe to herſelf, 'what danger threatens either my 'virtue, or my reputation. — A wife 'may certainly go any where with her 'huſband,— beſides, a lady will be there, '— a relation of his lordſhip's, — he 'can communicate nothing to me in 'their preſence, that I ſhould bluſh to 'hear, and it would be rather ridiculous 'prudery than diſcretion in me, to deny 'myſelf the ſatisfaction of ſuch good 'company.'

It muſt be acknowledged, for it but too plainly appears from every circumſtance of this lady's conduct both before and after marriage, that the unhappy propenſity in her nature, for attracting univerſal admiration, rendered her little regardful either of the guilt, or the diſquiets

quiets to which her beauty was acceſſory: — if ſhe was admired and loved, ſhe cared not to what end ;— in fine, it made her perfectly uncorrupt and pure, as her own inclinations were, rather triumph in than regret the power ſhe had of inſpiring the moſt inordinate and vicious ones in others.

Thus, more delighted than alarmed, ſhe equip'd herſelf with all the arts and labour'd induſtry of female pride, for ſecuring the conqueſt ſhe had gained; — ſafe as ſhe imagined herſelf from all the encroachments of preſumptuous love, ſhe pleaſed herſelf with the thoughts of being looked upon by the adoring peer, as Adam did upon the forbidden fruit; — longing, wiſhing, but not daring to approach.

She had but juſt finiſhed her embelliſhments, and was looking in the great glaſs to ſee if all was right, when mr. Munden ſent up ſtairs to know if ſhe was ready, and to tell her his noble patron had ſent his own chariot to fetch them: — on hearing this, ſhe immediately tript down ſtairs, ſinging as ſhe went this part of an old ſong,

With

With an air and a face,
And a ſhape and a grace,
Let me charm like Beauty's goddeſs.

Oh, how will the prudent, reſerved part of the ſex lament, that a young lady, endued with ſo many perfections, ſo many amiable qualities, ſhould thus perſevere in a vanity, of which ſhe had already experienced ſuch vexatious conſequences.

Lord **** received them in a faſhion, which fully gratified the ambition of mr. Munden, and the yet leſs warrantable expectations of his wife:—the lady mentioned in the letter, was already with him, who, on his lordſhip's preſenting mrs. Munden to her, ſaluted her with abundance of ſweetneſs and good breeding:—ſhe was a perſon of about thirty years of age; had been extremely handſome, and ſtill retained the remains of charms, which muſt have been very powerful in their bloom;—nor was her converſation leſs agreeable than her perſon;—ſhe ſaid little indeed, but what ſhe ſaid was extremely to the purpoſe, and very entertaining:—there was notwithſtanding a certain air of melancholy about her, which ſhe in vain attempted to conceal, tho' it was eaſy to perceive

ſhe

ſhe made uſe of her utmoſt efforts for that purpoſe.

His lordſhip was extremely gay and ſpirituous, as indeed were all the company, during the whole time at dinner; but it was no ſooner over than he ſaid to mr. Munden, — 'dear Munden I have 'a buſineſs to communicate to you, 'which theſe ladies muſt forgive me if I 'make a ſecret of to them;'— with theſe words he took mr. Munden into another room, and ſpoke to him in the following manner.

'A perſon,' ſaid he, 'has been guilty 'of an action in regard to me, which it 'is neither conſiſtent with my honour, 'or my humour to put up with; — I 'will ſhew you,' continued he giving him an unſealed letter, 'what I have 'wrote to him upon the occaſion, and 'that will inſtruct you how I intend to 'proceed, and at the ſame time convince 'you of the confidence I repoſe in your 'friendſhip for me.'

Mr. Munden took the letter out of his lordſhip's hands, and found the contents as follow.

To

To WILLIAM W——, Eſq;

SIR,

" THough the affront you have offered
" me deſerves the ſevereſt treat-
" ment, yet in conſideration of our for-
" mer intimacy, I ſhall wave my peer-
" age, and require no other ſatisfaction
" from you than what any private gen-
" tleman has a right to demand of ano-
" ther, in a caſe of the like nature.

" I ſhall be in the green park to-mor-
" row about eight in the morning, where
" I believe you have honour enough to
" meet me; — bring with you any one
" perſon you think fit:— the gentleman,
" who puts this into your hands, will
" accompany me.

" Not that I mean our friends ſhould
" be engaged in the quarrel, but think it
" proper, that there ſhould be ſome wit-
" neſſes, that no foul play is attempted
" on either ſide — I am,

Expecting your ready compliance,

Sir,

Yours, &c,

* * * *.

" You

'You ſee, Munden,' ſaid he, perceiving he had done reading, 'the aſ-'ſurance I build on the ſincerity of your 'attachment to me.' 'Your lordſhip does 'me an infinity of honour,' replied the other with a low bow, 'and I have no-'thing to regret, but that my ſword 'muſt lie idle while your lordſhip's is 'employed.'

'As for that,' — reſumed the peer, 'I always thought it the utmoſt folly 'and injuſtice to ſet two people on cut-'ting one another's throats, meerly in 'compliment to their friends: — but 'my dear Munden,' — purſued he, looking on his watch; 'I would have you 'go immediately; — I believe you will 'find him at the cocoa-tree; he is gene-'rally there about this hour, — but if 'not, they will direct you where to find 'him.'

He ſealed the letter while he was ſpeaking, which being again delivered to mr. Munden, they both returned into the room where the ladies were. — Mr. Munden ſtayed no longer than while his footman called a hackney coach to the door; as he was going out, the nobleman ſaid to him, I doubt not but you will be back as ſoon as poſſible, in the mean time

time we three will amuſe ourſelves with a game at ombre.

Mrs. Munden was a good deal ſurpriſed at her huſband's departure, but had much more reaſon to be ſo, as well as alarmed, in a moment or two after.

Cards were but juſt laid upon the table, when a ſervant came haſtily, and told the lady a meſſenger had brought word that her mother was ſuddenly ſeized with an apoplectic fit; — that it was not yet known whether the old lady would recover, and that ſhe muſt come home that inſtant.

On this ſhe ſtarted up, ſeemed in a moſt terrible fright, and took her leave with a precipitation natural enough to the occaſion, in a daughter poſſeſſed of any ſhare of duty or affection.

This part of the hiſtory muſt be very unintelligible indeed, if the reader has not by this time ſeen, that all this was but a feint contrived by the amorous nobleman, in order to get an opportunity of employing the whole battery of his rhetoric againſt the virtue he was impatient to triumph over.

This

This pretended kinſwoman was in fact, no more than a caſt-off miſtreſs of his lordſhip's, but having her dependance entirely upon him, was obliged to ſubmit in every thing to his will, and become an aſſiſtant to thoſe pleaſures with others, which ſhe no longer could afford him in her own perſon.

She was brought to his houſe that day for two reaſons, — firſt, — as he knew not what fears, and what apprehenſions the beauty of mrs. Munden might raiſe in her huſband, and render him ſuſpicious of the true motive of his being ſent away, had no other company been there; — and ſecondly to prevent that fair intended victim of his unwarrantable flame, from being too ſuddenly alarmed at finding herſelf alone with him.

Mrs. Munden however had no time to examine into the meaning of what ſhe ſaw, and all ſhe could recollect in that inſtant was, that ſhe was in the houſe, and wholly in the power of a perſon, who had deſigns upon her, to which neither her honour, nor her inclinations would permit her to aquieſce, and trembled for the event, but concealing the diſorders of her mind as much as poſble: — 'Well my lord,' — ſaid ſhe, taking

ing up the cards, and beginning to ſhuffle them, 'ſince we are deprived of a 'third perſon by this melancholly acci-'dent, what think your lordſhip of a 'game at picquet.'

'I think,' anſwered he, looking upon her with eyes, which redoubled all her terrors; — 'that to waſte the precious 'time in cards, and throw away the 'golden opportunity of telling you how 'much my ſoul adores you, would be a 'ſtupidity, which neither love, nor for-'tune could forgive me for.'

In ſpeaking theſe words he ſnatched one of her hands, and in ſpite of her endeavours to withdraw it, preſſed it to his mouth with an eagerneſs, which would have convinced her, if ſhe had not been ſo before, of the vehemence of thoſe deſires with which he was enflamed.

Fie my lord,' cried ſhe, with an air as haughty and reſerved as it was in the power of any woman to aſſume, 'this is 'not language with which the wife of 'him you are pleaſed to call your friend, 'could expect to be entertained.'

'Unreaſonably urged,' cried he: 'Ought 'my friendſhip to the huſband render 'me

'me inſenſible of the beauties of the 'wife? Or would your generous conſent-'ing to reward my paſſion diſſolve the 'union between us? — no, on the con-'trary, it would rather be cemented; — I 'ſhould then love him not only for his 'own, but for your ſake alſo, and ſhould 'think myſelf bound to ſtretch my pow-'er to its extremeſt limits to do him ſer-'vice: — be aſſured, my angel, that in 'bleſſing me you fix the happineſs of 'your huſband, and eſtabliſh his future 'fortune in the world.

Theſe words, joined to mr. Munden's being gone away ſhe knew not on what errand, made her ſhudder with the apprehenſions, that he might have been tempted by the hopes of intereſt to become yielding to the diſhonourable intentions of his patron; — but willing to be more confirmed; 'I hope my lord,' anſwered ſhe, 'that you cannot think mr. Munden 'has ſo mean a ſoul as to accept of an 'eſtabliſhment on ſuch conditions.'

'I could name ſome huſbands, and 'thoſe of the firſt rank too' ſaid he, 'who to oblige a friend, and for parti-'cular reaſons, have conſented to the 'complaiſance of their wives in this 'point, but I deſire no ſuch ſacrifice 'from mr. Munden; there is no ne-

ceſſity,

'ceſſity for it, I have now ſent him on a 'pretence too plauſible for him to ſuſpect 'the real motive of my wanting to get 'rid of him: — I had a lady here alſo 'for no other end than to prevent him 'feeling any diſquiet on leaving us al-'together; — I ſhall always take the 'ſame precautions, — all our interviews 'ſhall be as private as your own wiſhes, 'and my happineſs be an eternal ſecret 'to the whole world as well as to your 'huſband.

'Come then my charmer', added he, attempting to take her in his arms; — 'we have no time to loſe, — away then 'with all idle ſcruples; — yield to my 'embraces; — aſſiſt my raptures, and be 'aſſured that my whole ſoul, — my for-'tune, and all my power can give, ſhall 'be at your diſpoſal.

It was the diſcompoſure of mrs. Munden's mind, which alone hindered her from interrupting him during the former part of his ſpeech; but the cloſe of it! joined with the action, which accompanied it, obliged her to collect all her ſcattered ſpirits, and flying to the other end of the room, in order to avoid his graſp; — 'forbear my lord,' ſaid ſhe,— 'know I deſpiſe your offers; and ſet my virtue

'virtue at a much higher rate, than all 'the advantage you, or the whole 'world would give in exchange.'

Lord **** finding he had to do with a miſtreſs of uncommon ſpirit, thought beſt to alter the manner of his addreſſes to her, and approaching her with an air much more humble and ſubmiſſive than he had hitherto done; — 'How I 'adore,' cried he, 'this noble diſintereſt-'edneſs in you; — you will grant no-'thing but to love alone, — be it ſo; — 'your beauty is indeed above all other 'price. — Let your huſband reap all the 'advantages, and let it be yours to have 'the pleaſure, like heaven to ſave from 'deſpair the man who cannot live without 'you.'

Perceiving, or at leaſt imagining he perceived ſome abatement in the fierceneſs of her eyes, on the change of his deportment, he perſiſted in it, — he even threw himſelf on his knees before her; — took hold of her hands; — bathed them alternately with tears, then dried them with his kiſſes; — in fine, he omitted nothing that the moſt paſſionate love, reſolute to accompliſh its gratification, could ſuggeſt to ſoften her into compliance.

At

At another time, how would the vanity of this lady have been elated to ſee a perſon of ſuch high conſideration in the world, thus proſtrate at her feet; but at this, the reflection how much ſhe was in his power, and the uncertainty how far he might exert that power, put to ſilence all the dictates of her pride, and rendered her, in reality, much more in awe of him than he affected to be of her: — ſhe turned her eyes continually towards the door, in hopes of ſeeing mr. Munden enter; and never had ſhe wiſhed for his preſence with the impatience ſhe now did.

The noble lord equally dreaded his return, and finding the replies ſhe made to his preſſures ſomewhat more moderate than they had been on the firſt opening his ſuit, flattered himſelf that a very little compulſion would complete the work: — he therefore reſolved to dally no longer, and having uſher'd in his deſign with a prelude of ſome warm kiſſes and embraces, was about to draw her into another room.

She ſtruggled with all her might, but her efforts that way being in vain, ſhe ſhrieked and call'd aloud for help. — This a little ſhocked him, — he let her go: 'What do you mean madam?' ſaid he: —

'Would you expoſe yourſelf and me to 'the ridicule of my ſervants? — I will 'expoſe myſelf to any thing', anſwered ſhe, 'rather than to the ruin and ever-'laſting infamy your lordſhip is pre-'paring for me.'

'Call not by ſo harſh a name', cried he, 'the effects of the moſt tender 'paſſion that ever was: — by heavens I 'love you more than life, nay, life with-'out you is not worth the keeping.' — Speaking theſe words he was about to lay hold of her again, and her cries having brought no body to her aſſiſtance, ſhe muſt infallibly have been loſt, if her better angel had not in that inſtant directed her eyes to a bell, which hung in the pannel of the wainſcot juſt behind the door of the room into which he was forcing her, — ſhe ſnatched the handle, and rung it with ſuch vehemence that it reſounded through the houſe.

This action made him releaſe her with a kind of an indignant fling, and a ſervant immediately coming up, — 'I believe', ſaid ſhe to him, 'my ſervant is below, '— pray order him to call me a chair 'this moment.' — The peer, not often accuſtomed to ſuch rebuffs, was ſo much confounded at the ſtrength of her reſolution,

tion, that he had not power to utter one word, and ſhe fearing another aſſault, ran to the door, which the footman haſtily ſhut after him, and having opened it, '—Your lordſhip', ſaid ſhe, 'has uſed 'me in a manner neither worthy of your-'ſelf nor me,—I leave you to bluſh at 'the remembrance.'

She waited not to hear what reply he would have made, but flew down ſtairs into the hall, where a chair being preſently brought, ſhe threw herſelf into it, extremely diſconcerted in her dreſs as well as mind.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains a brief recital of ſeveral very remarkable, and equally affecting occurrences, of which the laſt mentioned extraordinary adventure was productive, and which may juſtly enough be look'd upon as yet more extraordinary than even the adventure itſelf.

MR. Munden, who was no leſs pleaſed and vain on the confidence his noble patron ſeemed to repoſe in him, than he

was ambitious of the favours he hoped to receive from him, had been extremely diligent in the execution of that commiſſion he had been entruſted with, but found much more difficulty in it than he could have imagined.

He was told at the bar of the Cocoa-tree, that the gentleman he enquired for had not been there ſince morning; — that ſir John E— had taken him home with him to dinner, and that in all probability they were ſtill together.

Mr. Munden, on this, order'd the coachman to drive to Mark-lane with all the ſpeed he could, but had, on his coming there, the mortification to hear, that Mr. W — had left ſir John about a quarter of an hour before, and was gone to the other end of the town; on which he drove back to the Cocoa-tree, thinking he might now meet him there, but was again diſappointed.

They informed him, however, that mr. W— had juſt called in, but ſtaid no longer than to tell them he would be there again in half an hour. — Mr. Munden was impatient at this delay, but could not think of returning to lord ****, without having done the buſineſs he was ſent upon:

upon: he therefore ſat down, and waited till the other came, which was ſomewhat ſooner than the time he had been made to hope.

Theſe gentlemen, though far from being intimately acquainted, were not altogether ſtrangers, having frequently met at the levee of lord ****. — They now ſaluted each other with the utmoſt politeneſs, after which, mr. Munden drawing him to the moſt retired part of the room, 'I have had a chace after you, ſir,' ſaid he, 'for a good part of this afternoon, 'and which would have been impertinent 'in me, if not excuſeable by my being 'under an indiſpenſible obligation of 'ſeeing you.

'Then, ſir,' replied the other, 'whatever the buſineſs be, I ſhall think myſelf 'happy in being found. —This, ſir, will 'inform you,' ſaid mr. Munden, giving him the letter. From lord ****,' cried mr. W—, as ſoon as he ſaw the ſuperſcription, — 'It is ſo,' anſwered mr. Munden, 'and I am heartily ſorry for 'the occaſion.'

Mr. W— made no reply to what mr. Munden ſaid, till he had examined the contents of the letter; and then after put-

ing it into his pocket with a careleſs air, 'I ſee into the meaning of this,' ſaid he; 'an ugly accident, which I have but 'lately diſcovered, has, I believe, miſre-'preſented me to his lordſhip: —could I 'be capable of what he at preſent thinks 'I am, I ſhould be utterly unworthy of 'the condeſcention he vouchſafes me by 'this invitation; — but, ſir, all this is 'founded on a miſtake, which may ea-'ſily be rectified; — I will not give his 'lordſhip the trouble of going to the 'green park, I will wait on him at 'his own houſe at the hour he mentions, 'and if what I have to ſay to him, does 'not fully convince him of my innocence, 'will follow either to that, or any other 'place he pleaſes, tho' no conſideration 'in the world, except his own com-'mands, ſhould compel me to draw my 'ſword againſt a breaſt I ſo much love 'and reverence.'

Mr. Munden replied, that he ſhould be extremely glad to find an affair, which at preſent ſeemed to threaten ſuch fatal conſequences, was amicably made up; and after having aſſured him, that he would deliver what he had ſaid, to his lordſhip, in the moſt exact manner, was about to take his leave, but could not do it ſo ſoon as he deſired, the other ſtill detain-

ing

ing him by beginning ſome ſubject or other of converſation, which, how frivolous ſoever, mr. Munden could not break off too ſuddenly without incuring cenſure of abruptneſs, and ill manners.

Lord **** in the mean time was in the utmoſt agitation; — not for the return of mr. Munden, for he very well knew the meſſage he would bring, but he had taken a great deal of pains to no purpoſe: — the beauty of mrs. Munden had inſpired him with the moſt eager deſire of enjoying her; — the gaiety of her temper, joined to the temptations in his power to offer, had given him an almoſt aſſured hope of gaining her; — and now to find himſelf thus repulſed, — repulſed with ſuch diſdain, left a ſurprize upon him which very much increaſed the ſhock of his diſappointment.

Beſides, as he doubted not but ſhe would inform her huſband of all that had paſſed between them, it gave the moſt mortal ſtab to that haughtineſs too incident to opulence and grandeur, to reflect he had given a man, ſo much beneath him, an opportunity of triumphing over him in his mind.

He had not recovered his confuſion, and was walking backwards and forwards in his drawing-room, with a diſordered motion, when mr. Munden returned, to whom he neither ſpoke, nor look'd upon. The ſatisfaction this gentleman had felt on finding the buſineſs of his embaſſy was like to terminate ſo happily, was very much damped at ſeeing himſelf received in this manner.

'I did not expect to find your lordſhip 'alone,' ſaid mr. Munden,— 'I believe not,' replied he; 'but an unlucky ac- 'cident at home deprived me of my 'couſin's company, and your wife it 'ſeems did not think herſelf ſafe with 'me.'

Theſe laſt words, and the contemptuous tone in which they were expreſſed, put him into the extremeſt conſternation; — 'I hope, my lord,' cried he, 'that 'mrs. Munden cannot have ſo far forgot 'herſelf as to have acted in any manner 'unbecoming of the reſpect due to your 'lordſhip. — Fine women will have their 'caprices,' reſumed the peer; — 'but 'no matter, let no more be ſaid of it.'

Mr. Munden then proceeded to repeat what mr. W— had ſaid to him, but his lord-

lordſhip took no notice, and ſeemed entirely unconcerned all the time he was ſpeaking; till the other adding, that if his lordſhip thought proper, he would attend him in the morning, in order to be at hand, in caſe the event ſhould require his preſence: — on which the peer replied peeviſhly,—'No, no;—you need 'not come, — I believe there will be no 'occaſion; — if there be, I can ſend for 'you.'

After this, mr. Munden eaſily perceiving his company was rather troubleſome than agreeable, made a low obeiſance, and withdrew, almoſt diſtracted in his mind at this ſudden turn of temper in his patron, and no leſs impatient to hear what his wife had to ſay on that account.

It was not in one of the beſt of humours, as the reader may eaſily imagine, that he now came home, nor did he find mrs. Munden in one very proper to alleviate his vexation. She was extremely penſive, and when he aſked her in ſomewhat of an imperious voice the reaſon of having left lord **** in ſo abrupt a manner, 'When 'you,' ſaid ſhe, 'forſook the guardianſhip 'of my honour, it was time for me to 'take the defence of it upon myſelf,

'which I could do no other way than by 'flight.'

'What is it you mean?' cried he,— 'I am certain my lord has too much 'friendſhip for me, to offer any rudeneſs 'to you.— Be not too certain,' anſwered 'ſhe, 'of the friendſhip of that baſe 'great man.'—She then began to repeat the diſcourſe, with which his lordſhip had entertained her, after being left alone with him, but had gone through a very ſmall part of it, before her huſband interrupted her, ſaying with a kind of a malicious ſneer,— that he was poſitive there was nothing at all in what ſhe apprehended;— that it was impoſſible for the noble lord to be in earneſt when he talked to her in ſuch terms;— that ſhe had only been deceived by her own vanity, to miſtake for a ſerious deſign upon her virtue, what was only meant for meer gallantry;— and then added with more paſſion, that he feared her idle reſentment had loſt him all his intereſt with the beſt of friends.

'Good Heaven!'— cried ſhe,— 'de-'fend me, and all virtuous women from 'ſuch gallantries;'—but know, ſir, continued ſhe, with a great deal of vehemence;— 'that but for that idle reſentment

'ſentment, as you are pleaſed to call it,
'my ruin and your diſhonour would have
'been completed by this beſt of friends.'

'How,' ſaid mr. Munden eagerly, —
'he did not ſure proceed to actions?'
Perceiving he was now in a diſpoſition
to liſten with more attention to what
ſhe ſaid than hitherto he had done, ſhe
heſitated not to acquaint him with every
particular of his lordſhip's behaviour to
her, and the means by which ſhe had de-
fended herſelf.

During this recital, mr. Munden bit
his lips, and appeared in very great emo-
tions; — he ſpoke not a word however,
till his fair wife, pitying the anxieties ſhe
ſaw him under, deſired him to think no
more of this accident ſince it was ſo hap-
pily got over: — 'It may be ſo in your
'opinion,' anſwered he fiercely, — 'but
'not in mine: — I foreſee the conſe-
'quences, though you perhaps think
'not of them. — 'Tis true, my lord's be-
'haviour is not to be juſtified, nor can
'yours in regard to me be ſo; you ought
'to have conſidered the dependance I
'had on him, and not have carried
'things with ſo high a hand; — you
'might have doubtleſs evaded this at-
'tempt by more gentle, and leſs affron-

'tive methods; but that curſed pride of 'yours muſt be gratified, though at the 'expence of all my expectations:' — With theſe words he flung out of the room, and this was all the return ſhe met with from her ungrateful huſband, for having reſiſted with ſuch courage and reſolution, temptations, which ſome women would have thought themſelves abſolved for yielding to the force of.

Ill-natured and perverſe as mr. Munden was, it muſt be confeſſed, that his preſent ſituation nevertheleſs merited ſome compaſſion: — he had a great ſhare of ambition; — loved both pleaſure and grandeur to an exceſs; and though far from being of a generous diſpoſition, the pride and vanity of his humour made him do many things through oſtentation, which his eſtate would not well ſupport: — he kept company with perſons of rank and fortune, much ſuperior to his own, and as he bore an equal part in their expences whenever he was with them, he ſtood in need of ſome addition to his revenue: — well therefore might he be chagrined at an accident, that caſt ſo dark a cloud over that proſpect of intereſt and preferment, he had flattered himſelf with from lord ****.

But

But though this was the main point, it was not the ſole ſubject of his diſcontent.— The motives for his being ſent by lord **** to mr. W—, the pretended quarrel between them, and the trifling excuſes made by the latter to detain him from making too quick a return, were all too obvious for him not to be aſſured that gentleman was privy, and agreed to be an aſſiſtant in the deſign his lordſhip had upon his wife.

Mr. W—, though the repreſentative of a borough in C—, was indeed no more than a creature of lord ****, to whoſe intereſt alone he was indebted for his ſeat in parliament; but it was not becauſe mr. Munden knew him to be obliged to do every thing enjoined by his lordſhip, that reſtrained the reſentment he conceived againſt him from breaking out, but becauſe he conſidered that a quarrel between them on this ſcore might occaſion the affair to become public, and expoſe both himſelf and wife to the ridicule of as many as ſhould hear of it.

Wrath, when enervate, eſpecially if inflamed by any juſt provocation, is certainly very dreadful to be borne, and what this injured husband ſuſtained in the firſt emotions of it, muſt have excited the pity of every reader of this hiſtory, if he had

had not afterwards meanly vented it where he had not the leaſt occaſion for diſguſt, but rather of the higheſt love, tenderneſs, and admiration.

In the midſt of theſe perplexities, however, let us leave him for a while, and return to her whoſe beauty had been the innocent cauſe of all this trouble to him, and danger to herſelf.

Wonderful indeed were the effects this laſt adventure produced in her; — many times before had ſhe been on the very verge of ruin, and as often indebted merely to fortune for her preſervation from the miſchiefs, into which her inadvertency had almoſt plunged her; — but none of thoſe dangers, — thoſe eſcapes had ever been capable of making any laſting impreſſion on her mind, or fixing her reſolution to avoid running again into the ſame miſtakes.

The cruel reproaches and reflections caſt on her by mr. Munden, filled her not now with the leaſt reſentment; for though ſhe deſerved them not upon the ſcore he made them, yet ſhe was conſcious, that ſhe did ſo for going to the houſe of lord ****, after having the ſtrongeſt

ſtrongeſt reaſons to believe he had diſhonourable intentions towards her.

She bluſhed to remember, that ſhe had given herſelf leave to be pleaſed at the thoughts of appearing amiable in the eyes of that great man: — 'Good God!' cried ſhe, 'what infatuation poſſeſs'd me! '— Am I not married! — Is not all I 'am the property of mr. Munden! — 'Is it not highly criminal in any one to 'offer to invade his right! — And can I 'be ſo wicked to take delight in the 'guilt, to which I am in a manner ac-'ceſſory!'

'The vanities of my virgin ſtate, continued ſhe, 'might plead ſome ex-'cuſe; — but nothing now can be urged 'in my defence for perſevering in them. '— The pride of ſubduing hearts is 'mine no more; — no man can now 'pretend to love me but with the baſeſt 'and moſt ſhameful views. — The man 'who dares to tell me he adores me, 'contradicts himſelf by that very de-'claration, and while he would perſuade 'me he has the higheſt opinion of me, 'diſcovers he has in reality the meaneſt'

In fine, ſhe now ſaw herſelf, and the errors of her paſt conduct in their true light:

light:— 'How ſtrange a creature have I 'been!' cried ſhe, 'how inconſiſtent 'with myſelf! I knew the character of a 'coquet both ſilly and inſignificant, yet 'did every thing in my power to acquire 'it:— I aimed to inſpire awe and reve-'rence in the men, yet by my imprudence 'emboldened them to the moſt unbecom-'ing freedoms with me:— I had ſenſe 'enough to diſcern real merit in thoſe 'who profeſt themſelves my lovers, yet 'affected to treat moſt ill thoſe, in whom 'I found the greateſt ſhare of it.— Na-'ture has made me no fool, yet not one 'action of my life has given any proof 'of common reaſon.

'Even in the greateſt, and moſt ſerious 'affair of life— that of marriage'— added ſhe, with a deep ſigh, 'have I 'not been governed wholly by caprice! '— I rejected mr. Trueworth, only 'becauſe I thought I did not love him 'enough, yet gave myſelf to mr. Mun-'den, whom at that time I did not 'love at all, and who has ſince, alaſs, 'taken little care to cultivate that affec-'tion I have laboured to feel for him.'

In ſumming up this charge againſt her-ſelf, ſhe found that all her faults, and her misfortunes had been owing either to an

ex-

exceſs of vanity; — a miſtaken pride, — or a falſe delicacy: — the two former appeared now too contemptible in her eyes for her not to determine utterly to extirpate. — But the latter ſhe found leſs reaſon to correct, ſince it happened only in regard to mr. Trueworth, and could never happen again, as both their marriages had put a total end to all tender communication between them.

This change in mrs. Munden's humour, great and ſudden as it was, did not however prove a tranſient one: — every day, every hour confirmed her in it; — and if at any time her natural vivacity made her ſeem a little pleaſed on hearing her wit, — her beauty, — or any other perfection, or accompliſhment, too laviſhly extolled, ſhe preſently checked herſelf for it, and aſſumed a look of reſerve, which though leſs haughty than ſhe had ſometimes put on upon different occaſions, had not the leſs effect, and ſeldom failed to awe the flatterer into ſilence, a proof of which the reader will immediately be preſented with.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Contains ſuch things as will be pleaſing to thoſe, whoſe candid diſpoſitions inteſt them in favour of the heroine of this hiſtory.

NOthing ſo much encourages an unwarrantable paſſion for a married woman, as to know ſhe has a huſband regardleſs of her charms. — A young gay gentleman, a companion of mr. Munden's, privy to moſt of his ſecrets, and partner with him in many a debauch, had ſeen mrs. Munden at miſs Airiſh's, where ſhe ſtill continued to viſit. He had entertained a kind of roving flame for her, which his friendſhip for her huſband could not prevent him from wiſhing to gratify. But though they often met, he never could get an opportunity of declaring himſelf; — all he could do was ſometimes to whiſper in her ear, that ſhe was divinely handſome; — that he adored her; and that he died for her; — and ſuch like ſtuff, which ſhe was too

too often accuſtomed to hear, to take much notice of.

The indifferent opinion, which moſt men of pleaſure or in other words, genteel rakes of the town, have of women in general, joined to the too great gaiety he had obſerved in mrs. Munden's behaviour, made him imagine there required little more for the gaining her than the making his addreſſes to her: — the means of ſpeaking to her in private ſeemed to him the ſole difficulty he had to get over, and in order to do ſo, he wrote to her in the following terms.

To Mrs. Munden.

Madam,

" A Fine woman would reap little ad-
" vantage from the charms ſhe is
" miſtreſs of, if confined to the languid
" embraces of a ſingle poſſeſſor: —
" marriage takes off all the poignancy of
" deſire; — a man has no reliſh for
" beauties that are always the ſame and
" always in his power; thoſe endearments,
" which would make his happineſs, be-
" come diſguſtful to him, by being his
" duty, and he naturally flies to ſeek joys
" yet untaſted in the arms of others: —
" this, fair angel, is the caſe with us
" all;

" all;— you have too much good ſenſe
" not to know it, or to expect your huſ-
" band ſhould vary from his ſex in this
" particular.

" Let thoſe unhappy women therefore
" to whom nature has been niggard of
" her bounties, pine in an abandoned
" bed: —you are formed to give, and to
" receive the moſt unbounded joys of
" love; — to bleſs, and to be bleſt with
" the utmoſt profuſion of extacies un-
" ſpeakable.

" To tell you how infinitely I adore
" you, and how much I have languiſhed
" for an opportunity of declaring my
" paſſion, would require a volume, in-
" ſtead of a letter; — beſides, my pen
" would but faintly expreſs the ſentiments
" of my ſoul; — they will have more
" energy when whiſpered in your ear: —
" I know ſuch a thing is impoſſible at
" your own houſe, or at any of thoſe
" where you viſit. — Favour me then I
" beſeech you with taking a little walk
" in the privy garden near the waterſide
" to-morrow about eleven, from which
" place, if my perſon and paſſion be not
" altogether diſagreeable to you, we
" may adjourn to ſome other, where I
may

" may give you more ſubſtantial demon-
" ſtrations how much I am,

" With the utmoſt ſincerity,

" DEAR MADAM,

" Your eternally devoted

" And moſt faithful admirer."

P. S. " I do not ſign my name for " fear of accidents, but flatter myſelf " my eyes have already ſaid enough to " inform you who I am."

If this letter had come but a very ſmall time before it did, 'tis poſſible that tho' mrs. Munden would even then have been highly offended at the preſumption, yet her vanity and curioſity mght have excited her to give the meeting required in it by the author, though it had only been, as ſhe would then have imagined merely to ſee who he was, and laugh at his ſtupidity for addreſſing her in that manner.

Not but ſhe had ſome diſtant gueſs at the perſon, but whether it was him, or any other who had taken this liberty, ſhe now gave herſelf not the leaſt concern;— ſhe was only deſirous to put an entire ſtop to thoſe audacious hopes ſhe found he had entertained

entertained, and to keep herſelf from receiving any future ſolicitations from the ſame quarter at leaſt.

To ſend back his letter without any other token of her reſentment, and diſdain at the contents, ſhe thought would not be ſufficient, and her ready wit after a little pauſe, preſented her with a method more efficacious; — it was this:

She folded up the epiſtle in the ſame faſhion it was when ſhe received it, and incloſed it in another peice of paper, in which ſhe wrote theſe lines.

SIR,

" AS I cannot think any man would
" be weak enough to dictate an
" epiſtle of this nature to the wife of
" mr. Munden, I muſt ſuppoſe you made
" ſome miſtake in the direction, and ſent
" that to me, which was intended for
" ſome other woman, whoſe character it
" might better agree with.

" I muſt intreat you however to be
" more careful for the future, for if any
" ſuch impertinence ſhould a ſecond time
" ariſe, I ſhall think myſelf obliged to
" make a confidante of my huſband,
" whoſe

" whoſe good ſenſe and penetration will
" doubtleſs enable him to diſcover the
" author, and his ſpirit and courage in-
" ſtruct him in what manner to reſent
" the affront offered to

His ever faithful

And moſt affectionate wife,

B. MUNDEN.

This had all the effect ſhe wiſh'd it ſhould have: — the beau was aſhamed of the fruitleſs attack he had made; — wrote to her no more, — avoided her ſight as much as poſſible, and whenever chance brought him into her company, behaved towards her with all the diſtance and reſpect imaginable.

This lady, now fully convinced how dangerous it was to be too much admir'd for her external charms, ceaſed even to wiſh they ſhould be taken notice of, and ſet herſelf ſeriouſly about improving thoſe perfections of the mind, which ſhe was ſenſible could alone entitle her to the eſteem of the virtuous and the wiſe.

Mr. Munden, who had never been diſquieted at the former part of his wife's behaviour, was equally inſenſible of this al-

alteration in her: — his cares, indeed, were too much taken up for re-eſtabliſhing himſelf with his right hon. patron, to give any attention to what paſs'd at home.

After much debating within himſelf, he thought it beſt to proceed, ſo as not to let the noble lord imagine he was acquainted with any part of the attempt made upon his wife; — but though he attended his levee as uſual, — paid him the ſame compliments, and ſeemed rather more obſequious than ever, he had the mortification to find himſelf very cooly received. — He ſtood undiſtinguiſhed in the circle, which conſtantly waited the motions of that great man, — was ſcarcely ſpoke to by him, and then with a kind of an indrawn reſerve, which made him juſtly enough apprehend, that he had little now to hope for from him.

The truth is, he ſaw through the policy of this dependant; — he could not doubt but mrs. Munden had told him of the violence he had offered to her; — he was conſcious of the baſeneſs of it, but he was not angry with himſelf for it, tho' with the perſon he would have injured, and could not forgive him for the knowledge

ledge of his crime, though the other was willing to forgive the crime itſelf.

The treatment he received at lord * * * * made him extremely churliſh to his wife: — he looked upon her as the primary cauſe of his misfortune, curſed his marriage with her, and even hated her for the beauties and good qualities, which ſhould have endeared her to him. — Nothing ſhe could ſay, or do, had the power of pleaſing him, ſo that ſhe ſtood in need of all her courage and fortitude to enable her to ſupport, with any tolerable degree of patience, the uſage ſhe received.

To heighten her misfortune, the late levity of her temper had hindered her from cultivating an acquaintance with any one perſon, on whoſe ſecrecy, ſincerity, and ſedateneſs ſhe could enough depend, for the diſburthening her mind of thoſe vexations, with which it was ſometimes overwhelmed.

But this was a matter of diſquiet to her, which ſhe had not long to complain of; — heaven ſent her a conſolation, of which ſhe had not the leaſt diſtant expectation, and reſtored her to a friend, by whom ſhe had thought herſelf utterly for-

ſaken, and whom ſhe had not herſelf ſcarce thought of for a long time.

Lady Loveit was now but juſt return'd from the country, where ſhe had continued ever ſince her marriage with ſir Baſil. — A famous French milliner being lately arrived from Paris, with abundance of curioſities, her ladyſhip went to ſee if there was any thing ſhe ſhould think worth the purchaſing. — Mrs. Munden was led by the ſame curioſity, and it was at this woman's houſe, that theſe ladies happened to meet after ſo long an abſence from each other.

Mrs. Munden was a little confuſed at firſt ſight of her, as bringing to her mind ſome paſſages, which it was never in her power to think on with the indifference ſhe wiſhed to do. — They embraced, however, with a great deal of affection, — made each other the uſual compliments on the mutual change of their condition, for lady Loveit, by ſome accident, had heard of mrs. Munden's marriage.

Though both theſe ladies were much more taken up with each other than with examining the trifles they came to ſee, yet neither of them would quit the ſhop with-

without becoming cuſtomers : — lady Loveit perceiving that mrs. Munden had neither coach, nor chair at the door, after having aſked what part of the town ſhe lived in, and finding it was not too much out of her way, deſired ſhe would give her leave to ſet her down in her chariot.

Mrs. Munden readily accepted the offer, and being come to the door of her houſe, would have perſuaded lady Loveit to alight, and come in, but ſhe excuſed herſelf, and at the ſame time gave her a preſſing invitation to her houſe as ſoon as opportunity permitted. — 'I know, madam,' ſaid ſhe ſmiling,' 'that it is my 'duty to pay the firſt viſit to your la-'dyſhip, — yet as you are here, — I 'ſhould not ſtand on that punctilio with 'you,' interrupted lady Loveit, with the ſame good humour, 'but I expect com-'pany at home, and know not but that 'they already wait for me.' The other then told her, ſhe would do herſelf the favour to attend her ladyſhip in a day or two: and this was all that paſſed at this firſt interview.

Mrs. Munden was extremely rejoiced at the opportunity of renewing her acquaintance with this lady, in whom ſhe had not the leaſt room to doubt, but that ſhe

ſhould find what ſhe ſo much wanted, a faithful adviſer and an agreeable companion; — they had always loved each another; — there was a great parity of ſentiment and principle between them, and as nothing but their different ways of thinking in point of conduct towards the men, had hindered them from being inſeparable friends, that bar being remov'd by mrs. Munden's change of temper, and her being now, what lady Loveit always was, no other remained to keep them from communicating their thoughts with the utmoſt freedom to each other.

The viſit promis'd by mrs. Munden, was not delayed beyond the time ſhe mentioned; lady Loveit received her without the leaſt reſerve, and they ſoon entered into converſation with the ſame ſprightlineſs, as before the change of their conditions.

Mrs. Munden had reſolved within herſelf, not to make the leaſt mention of mr. Trueworth's name, but feeling, notwithſtanding, a good deal of impatience to hear ſomething of him, artfully entered into a diſcourſe, which ſhe knew muſt draw the other in to ſay ſomething concerning him,

'I need not ask,' ſaid ſhe, 'how you 'liked the country; it is pretty plain from 'your continuing there ſuch a length of 'time, that you found more pleaſures at 'ſir Bazil's ſeat, than any you had left be-'hind.' 'The houſe is well ſituated indeed', replied lady Loveit, 'yet I have paſſed the 'leaſt part of my time there, ſince I left 'London, — nor have we ſtaid away ſo 'long entirely through choice, but have 'in a manner been detained by a ſucceſ-'ſion of accidents altogether unforeſeen.

'It took up ſix weeks,' continued ſhe, 'to receive the viſits, which were every 'day crouded upon us, from all parts of 'the country: — this hurry being over, 'we could do no leſs than accompany 'mr. Wellair and his lady, who had been 'with us all this while, to their houſe, 'where we ſtayed about a fortnight; — 'after which, ſir Bazil having promiſed 'my brother and ſiſter Trueworth, to 'paſs ſome time with them in Oxford-'ſhire, we croſſed the country to that 'gentleman's fine ſeat, where, as you may 'ſuppoſe, his arrival was welcomed in 'much the ſame manner ſir Baſil's had 'been in Staffordſhire: — beſides all his 'relations, intimate friends, tenants and 'dependants, I believe there was ſcarce 'a gentleman or lady, twenty miles round,

'who did not come to congratulate him 'on his marriage and return.

'For the reception of thoſe gueſts,' went ſhe ſtill on, 'the generous mr. True-'worth omitted nothing that might teſ-'tify his joy on the occaſion of their 'coming; — feaſting employed their 'days, and balls their nights: — but 'alas! in the midſt of theſe variegated 'ſcenes of pleaſure, death — ſudden death, 'ſnatched away the ſource of all our joys, 'and turned the face of gladneſs into the 'moſt poignant grief.

'Death, did your ladyſhip ſay!' cried mrs. Munden, with an extraordinary emotion, 'Is then mr. Trueworth dead?' 'No 'madam', replied the other, wiping away ſome tears, which the memory of this fatal accident drew from her eyes, 'mr. 'Trueworth lives, and I hope will long 'do ſo, to be an honour to his country, 'and a comfort to all, who are ſo happy 'as to know him, — for certainly there 'never was a man more endued with 'qualities for univerſal good; — but it 'was his wife, — his amiable wife, that 'died.'

'His wife!' cried mrs. Munden, interrupting her a ſecond time, 'Is he al-'ready

'ready a widower? Too ſoon, indeed, he 'became ſo,' anſwered lady Loveit; — 'ſcarce three months were elapſed from 'the day which made her a bride, to 'that which made her a lifeleſs corpſe:— 'we were altogether with ſome other 'company one evening in the tur-'ret, which, by the help of ſome large 'telleſcopes mr. Trueworth had placed 'there, commands the proſpect of three 'countries at once, when my poor ſiſter 'was ſeized ſuddenly ill; — as ſhe was 'ſuppoſed to be pregnant, her complaint 'at firſt, was taken no other notice of, 'than to occaſion ſom pleaſantries, which 'new married women muſt expect to 'bear; — but ſhe ſoon grew viſibly 'worſe, — was obliged to be carried 'down ſtairs, and put directly into bed; 'the next morning ſhe diſcovered ſome 'ſymptoms of a fever, but it proved no 'more than the forerunner of the ſmall-'pox, of which diſtemper ſhe died, be-'fore her danger was apprehended, even 'by the phyſician.

'How I pity both the living and the 'dead,' ſaid mrs. Munden, 'mr. True-'worth certainly could not ſupport ſo 'great a loſs, with any degree of mode-'ration?' — 'The ſhock at firſt', replied lady Loveit, 'was as much as all his

'philoſophy and ſtrength of reaſon 'could enable him to combat with: — 'ſir Baſil, though deeply affected for the 'loſs of ſo amiable a ſiſter, was obliged 'to conceal his own ſorrows, the better 'to alleviate thoſe he ſaw him in, and 'this kept us for two whole months at 'his houſe after the ceremony of the 'funeral was over. We had then prevailed 'on him to return with us to London; 'every thing was prepared for our de-'parture, when an unlucky accident hap-'pened to myſelf, which detained us for 'yet a conſiderable time longer.

'We were diverting ourſelves one day 'with angling,' continued ſhe, 'when in 'endeavouring to caſt my rod at too 'great a diſtance, I ſtooped ſo far over 'the bank, that I plunged all at once, 'head foremoſt, into the water: — the 'pond, it ſeems, was pretty deep, and I 'was in ſome danger; — ſir Baſil and 'mr. Trueworth ſeeing me fall, jumped 'in at the ſame inſtant, and by their aſ-'ſiſtance, I was brought ſafe to ſhore; I 'was immediately carried into the houſe, 'ſtript of my wet garments, and put in-'to a warm bed, but the fright had ſo 'great an effect upon me, that it cauſed 'an abortion, which as I was then in the 'fifth month of my pregnancy, had like

'to

'to have proved fatal to me: —I was 'cloſe priſoner to my chamber for ſe-'veral weeks, and on my being juſt 'able to leave it, was adviſed to have 'recourſe, firſt to the Briſtol, and then 'to the Bath waters, for the better eſta-'bliſhment of my health: accordingly 'we went to both thoſe places, ſtayed as 'long at each as I found needful for the 'purpoſe that brought me thither, and on 'my perfect recovery, ſir Baſil having 'ſome buſineſs at his eſtate, returned to 'Staffordſhire; —made a ſhort excurſion 'to mrs. Wellair's, and then we bowled 'up to London.

'This,' added ſhe, is the whole hiſtory 'of my eleven months abſence; — I 'ſhould only have told you, that we had 'not mr. Trueworth's company in our 'laſt ramble; —one of the members for 'his county having vacated his ſeat by 'accepting an employment, mr. True-'worth was prevailed upon, by a great 'number of gentlemen and freeholders, to 'oppoſe his being rechoſen, by ſetting up 'for a candidate himſelf; —the election 'was to come on in a few days after our 'departure, and we have ſince heard that 'he ſucceeded in his attempt.'

Lady Loveit having finiſhed her long

narrative, and received the compliments of mrs. Munden for the trouble ſhe had given herſelf, was beginning to aſk ſome queſtions concerning her own affairs, but ſome ladies coming in, broke off, for the preſent, all converſation on this head, and mrs. Munden ſoon after took leave, tho' not without receiving an aſſurance from the other, of having her viſit returned in a ſhort time.

CHAP. XVI.

Preſents the Reader, among many other particulars, with a full, tho' as conciſe, an account, as can be given, of the real quality and condition of the lady, that mrs. Munden had ſeen, and been ſo much charmed with at the mercer's.

MRS. Munden carried enough home with her from lady Loveit's, to employ her mind for that whole night at leaſt; — what ſhe had been told in relation to the death of mrs. Trueworth, raiſed a ſtrange contrariety of ideas in her, which it was impoſſible for her either to recon-

reconcile, or oblige either the one or the other totally to ſubſide.

She thought it great pity, that ſo virtuous, ſo beautiful, and ſo accompliſh'd a young lady, as ſhe had been told mrs. Trueworth was, ſhould thus early be ſnatch'd away from all the joys of love and life, but could not lament ſo melancholly an incident, in a manner ſhe was ſenſible it deſerved: — envy had ever been a ſtranger to her breaſt, yet ſince her own marriage, and that of mr. Trueworth with his lady, ſhe had ſometimes been tempted to accuſe heaven of partiality, in making ſo wide a difference in their Fates: — and though the blame of her misfortunes lay wholly on herſelf, had been apt to imagine, that ſhe had only been impelled by an unavoidable impulſe, to act as ſhe had done, and was fated by an invincible neceſſity, to be the enemy of her own happineſs.

Thus did this fair predeſtinarian reaſon within herſelf, whenever the ill-uſage of mr. Munden made her reflect on the generoſity of mr. Trueworth: — ſhe repined not at the felicities, ſhe ſuppoſed were enjoyed by mrs. Trueworth, but regretted that her own lot had been caſt ſo vaſtly different.

But though all theſe little heart-burnings now ceaſed, by the death of that ſo lately happy lady, and even common humanity demanded the tribute of compaſſion for her deſtiny, of which none had a greater ſhare, on other occaſions, than mrs. Munden, yet could ſhe not on this pay it without ſome interruptions from a contrary emotion; — in theſe moments, if it may be ſaid ſhe grieved at all, it was more becauſe ſhe knew, that mr. Trueworth was grieved, than for the cauſe that made him ſo.

Her good ſenſe, her juſtice, and her good nature, however, gave an immediate check to ſuch ſentiments, whenever ſhe found them riſing in her, but her utmoſt efforts could not wholly ſubdue them: — there was a ſecret ſomething in her heart, which ſhe would never allow herſelf to think ſhe was poſſeſt of, that in ſpite of all ſhe could do, diffuſed an involuntary ſatisfaction at the knowledge, that mr. Trueworth was a widdower.

If lady Loveit could have foreſeen the commotions her diſcourſe raiſed in the breaſt of her fair friend, ſhe would certainly never have entertained her with it, but ſhe ſo little ſuſpected her having any

any tenderneſs for mr. Trueworth, that ſhe obſerved not the changes inher countenance, when ſhe mentioned that gentleman, as ſhe afterwards frequently did, on many occaſions, in the courſe of the viſits to each other; — nor could mrs. Munden, being ignorant herſelf of the real cauſe of the agitations ſhe was in, make her ladyſhip a confidant in this, as ſhe did in all her other affairs, — the little happineſs ſhe enjoyed in marriage not excepted.

Lady Loveit had indeed a pretty right idea of her misfortune in this point, before ſhe heard it from herſelf: — ſir Baſil, tho' not at all converſant with mr. Munden, was well acquainted with his character, and manner of behaviour, and the account he gave of both to her on being told to whom he was married, left her no room to doubt how diſagreeable a ſituation the wife of ſuch a huſband muſt be in: — ſhe heartily commiſerated her hard fate; — yet, as lady Truſty had done, ſaid every thing to perſwade her to bear it with a becoming patience.

Perceiving ſhe had loſt ſome part of her vivacity, and would frequently fall into very melancholly muſings, ſir Baſil himſelf, now fully convinced of her merit, and

good

good qualities, added his endeavours to thoſe of his amiable conſort for the exhilerating her ſpirits:—they would needs have her make one in every party of pleaſure, either formed by themſelves, or wherein they had a ſhare, and obliged her to come as often to their houſe as ſhe could do without giving offence to her domeſtic tyrant.

An exceſs of gaiety when curbed, is apt to degenerate into it's contrary extream:—it muſt therefore be confeſs'd that few things could have been more lucky for mrs. Munden than this event,—ſhe had loſt all reliſh for the converſation of the miſs Airiſhes, and thoſe other giddy creatures, which had compoſed the greateſt part of her acquaintance, and too much ſolitude might have brought on a gloomineſs of temper, equally uneaſy to herſelf, and to thoſe about her; but the ſociety of theſe worthy friends,—the diverſions they prepared for her, and the company to which they introduced her, kept up her native livelineſs of mind, and at the ſame time convinced her, that pleaſure was no enemy to virtue, or to reputation, when partook with perſons of honour and diſcretion.

She had been with them one evening, when

when the ſatisfaction ſhe took in their converſation, the preſſures they made to detain her, joined to the knowledge, that there was no danger of mr. Munden's being uneaſy at her abſence, he ſeldom coming home till towards day-break, engaged her to ſtay till the night was pretty far advanced, yet late as it was, ſhe was preſented with an adventure of as odd a kind, as ever ſhe had been ſurprized with

She was undreſſing, in order to go to bed, when ſhe heard a very loud knocking at the ſtreet-door, after which her footman came up, and told her, that a woman was below, who ſaid ſhe muſt ſpeak with her immediately. — 'I ſhall 'ſpeak to no body at this time of the 'night,' ſaid mrs. Munden, 'therefore 'go down and tell her ſo. — The fellow 'went, but returned in a moment or two, and told her, that the perſon would take no denial, nor would go out of the houſe without ſeeing her. —'Some very im-'pudent creature, ſure, 'ſaid mrs. Munden, — 'but do you go,' added ſhe in the ſame breath, to the maid that waited on her, 'and aſk her name and bu-'ſineſs, — if ſhe will tell neither, let her 'be turned out of the houſe.'

She was in a good deal of perplexity, to

to think who ſhould enquire for her at that late hour, when the ſervant ſhe had ſent to examine into the matter, came back, and before ſhe had well entered the chamber, cried out, — 'Lord, madam, I 'never was ſo aſtoniſhed in my life! I 'wonder Tom could ſpeak in ſuch a rude 'manner; — the woman, as he called her, 'is a very fine lady, I am ſure, though 'ſhe has no hoop, nor ſtays on, — no-'thing but a fine rich brocade wrapping 'gown upon her: — ſhe looks, as if ſhe 'was juſt going to bed, or rather com-'ing out of bed, for her head-cloaths are 'in great diſorder, and her hair all 'about her ears.

'Well, but her name and buſineſs,' demanded mrs. Munden, haſtily. 'Nay, 'madam,' replied the maid, 'ſhe will 'tell neither, but to yourſelf; ſo pray, 'dear madam, either come down ſtairs, 'or let her be brought up, — I am ſure 'ſhe does not look as if ſhe would do 'you any hurt.'

Mrs. Munden pauſed a little on what ſhe had heard, and believing there muſt be ſomething very extraordinary, indeed, both in the perſon, and the viſit, reſolved to be convinced of the truth, therefore, having given a ſtrict charge, that both the

the footmen ſhould be ready at her call, in caſe there ſhould be any occaſion for them, went into the dining-room, and ordered that the perſon who enquired for her, ſhould be introduced.

Her whole appearance anſwered exactly to the deſcription that had been given of her by the maid, but it was her face which moſt alarmed mrs. Munden, as being poſitive ſhe had ſeen it before, tho' when, or where, ſhe could not at that inſtant recollect.

But the ſtranger ſoon eaſed her of the ſuſpenſe ſhe was in, when throwing herſelf at her feet, and burſting into a flood of tears, 'you once offered me your 'friendſhip, madam,' ſaid ſhe, —'a con-'ſciouſneſs of my own unworthyneſs, 'made me refuſe that honour, but I now 'come to implore your compaſſion, and 'charitable protection. — I have no hope 'of ſafety, or of ſhelter, but in your 'goodneſs and generoſity.'

The accents of her voice now diſcovered her to be no other, than the lady mrs. Munden had ſeen at the mercer's: — ſhe was ſtrangely confounded, but not ſo much as to hinder her from raiſing the diſtreſſed fair one, with the greateſt civi-

'lity

lity, and ſeating her in a chair,— 'Tho' 'I cannot comprehend, madam,' anſwered ſhe, 'by what accident you are 'reduced to addreſs me in theſe terms, 'yet you may rely upon my readineſs 'to aſſiſt the unfortunate, eſpecially, a 'perſon, whom I cannot but look upon, 'as far from deſerving to be ſo.

'Oh, would to God,' cryed the other, very emphatically, 'that my hiſtory 'could preſerve that kind opinion in you; 'but alas, though I find myſelf obliged 'to relate it to you, in order to obtain 'the protection I intreat, I tremble, leſt 'by doing ſo, I ſhould forfeit thoſe pre-'tentions to your mercy, which other-'wiſe my ſex, and my diſtreſs, might 'juſtly claim.'

Theſe words were ſufficient to have excited the curioſity of a woman, who had leſs of that propenſity in her nature, than mrs. Munden; — ſhe told her, that by being made the confidant of her affairs, ſhe ſhould think herſelf obliged to excuſe whatever ſhe found not worthy of her approbation.

Prepare yourſelf then, madam, ſaid her ſtill weeping gueſt, — ſummon all your goodneſs to forgive the frailties of 'youth,

youth, and inadvertency, and to pity the ſad conſequences, which ſometimes attend the pride of flattered beauty, and vain deſire of admiration.

This expreſſion ſunk more deeply in the mind of mrs. Munden, than the perſon uttered it, imagined: — ſhe made no reply, however, and the other began the narrative ſhe had promiſed, in theſe, or the like terms.

The Hiſtory of Mademoiſelle de Roquelair.

" I Need not tell you, madam', ſaid ſhe, " that I am not a native of this king- " dom, my bad pronunciation of the " language, ſpeaks it for me; — I am, " indeed, by birth a Pariſian, and daugh- " ter of the ſieur de Roquelair, a man " of ſome eſtimation in the world.

" The great hopes conceived of me " in my infancy, encouraged him to be " almoſt profuſe in the expences of my " education; — no accompliſhment be- " fitting of my ſex and rank, was de- " nied me; — in fine, it was eaſy to ſee " he had an affection for me, above all " his other children, and that the par- " tial opinion he had of my perſon and " underſtanding, made him build the

" higheſt

" higheſt expectations on my future " fortune.

" But alas! what he intended for my " happineſs, proved my undoing; — I " had but juſt attained my fifteenth " year of age, when the little beauty I " was miſtreſs of, was taken notice of " by the duke de M—— as I was walk- " ing one evening in the Tuilleries, with " a young companion of my own ſex:— " he paſt us twice without ſpeaking, " but at the third turn, accoſted us with " a gallantry natural to perſons of his " high rank; — the praiſes he beſtowed " on me, were ſuch as might excuſe " ſome vanity in a heart ſo young and " unexperienced as mine then was.

" On our leaving the walks, a gen- " tleman of his retinue followed, and as " I afterwards was informed, enquired " who I was, and many other particu- " lars concerning me; — the next morn- " ing, being at maſs in the church of St. " Sulpice, I ſaw the duke again, and on " my coming out, had a letter put into " my hands, which as ſoon as I got to a " convenient place, I opened, and found, " as I before imagined, from the duke.

" After magnifying the power of my wit,

" my

" my beauty, my fine ſhape, and a thou-
" ſand charms, with which his amorous
" fancy painted me, and proteſting with
" the moſt ſolemn imprecations words
" could form, his everlaſting adoration
" of me, he intreated I would meet him
" at the ſame place, where he had firſt
" ſeen me, and appointed an hour in
" which he knew leaſt company would
" be there.

" I was imprudent enough to comply
" with this requeſt; — my illuſtrious
" lover was there before me, — he ſa-
" luted me with the utmoſt tranſport in
" his voice and eyes, — led me to a re-
" tired part of the walk, — made me
" the moſt ſplendid offers, and endea-
" voured to perſuade me, that being his
" miſtreſs was a ſtation more reſpect-
" able, than being the wife of a private
" gentleman, or even of a little marquis.

" I was unprepared to confute the
" arguments he urged, and to confeſs
" the truth, felt but too much ſatisfac-
" tion in hearing him ſpeak; — my
" tongue obeyed the dictates of my heart,
" and told him, that I would be his, —
" though I cannot ſay, that I was tempt-
" ed by any extraordinary liking of his
" perſon,

" perſon, but merely by my ambition of
" pleaſing a prince of the blood royal.

" It was agreed between us, that a
" proper place ſhould be provided for
" my reception, and I ſhould quit my
" father's houſe entirely, and this was to
" be accompliſhed at the end of three
" days, but before the expiration of that
" time, a perſon, who had ſeen me in
" the Tuilleries, carried home intelli-
" gence with what company I had been,
" and my father, who preferred virtue
" above grandeur, took all imaginable
" precautions to prevent my continuing
" ſo dangerous an intercourſe.

" But what cannot the power of gold
" effect? — though I was locked up in
" my chamber, — no letters or meſſages
" permitted to be delivered to me, an
" agent of the duke's, by a large bribe,
" corrupted one of the ſervants, by whoſe
" aſſiſtance I got out of the houſe, when
" all the reſt of the family were aſleep,
" and a chariot waiting for me at the
" end of the ſtreet, carried me to a mag-
" nificent hotel, where I found my no-
" ble lover, and every thing I could
" wiſh, ready to receive me.

" Here I lived, for near two whole
" years,

" years, in a pomp which excited the " envy, and ſet me above the ſcandal of " the cenſorious; —but at length ma- " lice overtook me, —the baſeneſs of " thoſe about me accuſed me to my prince " of having wronged his bed; — he too eaſily gave credit to their aſperſions, " and not only withdrew his affection " and his favours from me, but cruelly " diſcarded me, without the leaſt provi- " ſion for my future ſupport.

" My father, who would never ſee me " in my exalted ſtate, equally ſhunned " me in my fallen one; — but at laſt, " through the interceſſion of ſome friends, " he was prevailed upon to forgive what " was paſt, provided I would leave Pa- " ris for ever, and ſpend the remainder " of my days in a monaſtery: — to this, " in the diſtracted condition I then " was, yielded, and a convent at Roan " was made choice of for my retreat; — " the abbeſs was wrote to concerning me, " and every thing was prepared for my " departure, when chance brought me " acquainted with mr. Thoughtleſs.

" You ſtart, madam," continued ſhe, perceiving mrs. Munden looked very much confuſed, — " but know at once, " that I am that very unfortunate wo-

' man

" man your brother brought with him " from Paris, — who has ever ſince liv'd " with him, and whom you muſt have " heard of."

The amazement mrs. Munden was in, on finding her the miſtreſs of her brother, was ſuch, as would not permit her to make any other reply, than to deſire ſhe would go on with what ſhe had farther to relate, on which, mademoiſelle de Roquelair reſumed her diſcourſe in this manner.

" This gentleman," ſaid ſhe, " was " well acquainted with my ſtory, but it " did not hinder him from entertaining " a paſſion for me; — he declared it to " me, — the averſion I had to a recluſe " life, — the allurements of the world, " and his more perſuaſive rhetoric, ſoon " won me to yield to his deſires: — I " made a ſecond elopement; — we em- " barked together, and came to England, " where I have had the command of his " family, and lived with him in all things " like a wife, except the name. — But " fortune, always my enemy, conjured up " a ſpirit of jealouſy in him, for my tor- " ment at firſt, and at laſt for my utter " ruin. — His fears of loſing me, as he " pretended, ſecluded me from all ſociety, " — denied me all the public diverſions

" of

" of the town, and though I lived amidſt
" the very ſeat of pleaſures, kept me as
" much a ſtranger to them, as if I had
" been a thouſand leagues removed; —
" but oh! this night, this night, madam,
" has compleated all his too ſuſpicious
" temper long ſince threatened. — The
" poor mercer, at whoſe houſe you ſaw
" me, came this night to bring a piece
" of ſilk I had beſpoke of him, — mr.
" Thoughtleſs came home immediately
", after, and being told who was above
" with me, flew up ſtairs, — burſt open
" the door, which by ſome accident was
" locked, ruſhed in with his drawn ſword,
" ſwearing he would ſacrifice us both; —
" the man, to avoid his fury, jumped out
" of the window into the yard; mr.
" Thoughtleſs ran down the back ſtairs,
" in order, I ſuppoſe, to make him in
" that place the victim of his rage: —
" whether he has effected it, I know not,
" for trembling at my own danger, I
" took that opportunity of running di-
" rectly out of the houſe, though where
" to go I knew not: — I had no friend,
" — no acquaintance, to whom I could
" apply; — I found myſelf all alone in
" the ſtreet, and expoſed to inſults,
" even worſe than thoſe from which I
" fled: — my good genius, for ſo I
" hope it was, which in that dreadful

"inſtant, reminded me of you; — I "had heard a high character of your "goodneſs, and was aſſured of it, even "by the little I had ſeen of you, when "you were pleaſed to think me worthy "your notice."

"This, madam," added ſhe, "has "brought me to you, and I once more "beſeech ſhelter and protection under "your roof, for this night, at leaſt, "till I can recollect in what manner "I ſhall diſpoſe of my wretched ſelf."

Though mrs. Munden was apprehenſive this lady had favoured herſelf too much in the recital ſhe had made, yet ſhe could not think of refuſing what ſhe aſked: — ſhe ordered a bed to be inſtantly prepared for her, and having conducted her to the chamber where ſhe was to lie, told her, ſhe would defer till the next morning any farther diſcourſe on the ſubject they had been talking of, as it was very late, and ſhe expected mr. Munden home, — ſo wiſhing her a good repoſe, returned to her own apartment, to reflect at more leiſure on this ſtrange adventure.

CHAP. XVII.

Is leſs entertaining than ſome of the former.

THE huſband of mrs. Munden being engaged abroad till his uſual hour, ſhe had juſt time to get into bed before he came home, which ſhe was very glad of, as it prevented him from aſking any queſtion concerning her ſitting up ſo much beyond her cuſtom; and ſhe was not willing to ſay any thing to him of her new gueſt, till ſhe had talked farther with her, and alſo examined into the truth of the affair, which brought her thither.

The more ſhe reflected on the account that lady had given of herſelf, the leſs reaſon ſhe found to give credit to ſome paſſages in it; — ſhe could not think that a prince, ſuch as the duke De M—, would on a meer ſuggeſtion caſt a woman out to miſery and beggary, whom he had ſo paſſionately loved; — and yet leſs could ſhe believe, that her brother, a man not fiery by nature, could have acted in the manner ſhe had repreſented, without a much greater provocation than what ſhe pretended.

Beſides, the mercer bringing home goods ſo late at night to a cuſtomer, and being locked up with her, ſeemed ſo inconſiſtent with innocence, that ſhe could not help being of opinion, that the cauſe muſt be bad indeed, which had no better plea for its defence.

It alſo afforded her a good deal of matter for vexation, that by expreſſing in ſuch warm terms, the great liking ſhe took of this lady, when they accidentally met at the mercer's, ſhe had encouraged her to make choice of her houſe for an aſylum in her diſtreſs, and by this means, rendered herſelf intereſted in the concerns of a ſtranger, who, at the beſt, it did not well become her to take part with.

But her moſt alarming apprehenſions were in relation to her brother: — ſhe knew not but if irritated to the high degree mademoiſelle de Roquelair had deſcribed, he might in reality have been guilty of ſome raſh action, which might endanger his reputation, and even his life.

Her mind being thus employed, it is eaſy to believe ſleep had little power over her eyes; — late as ſhe went to bed, ſhe roſe pretty early in the morning, and impatient

patient to know ſomething farther of the tranſactions of the preceding night, ſhe diſpatched a ſervant to her brother's houſe under pretence of enquiring after his health, not doubting, but by the anſwer he would bring, ſhe ſhould be able to form ſome conjecture, whether any thing of the nature mademoiſelle de Roquelair ſeemed to apprehend, had really happened or not.

The man returning with intelligence, that mr. Thoughtleſs was very well, and not yet ſtirring, gave her great conſolation; —ſhe then went up to the chamber of mademoiſelle, and after giving her the uſual ſalutation of the morning, ſat down by her bedſide, and began to talk to her in this manner.

'Madam, ſaid ſhe, I have been con-
'ſidering on your ſtory, and as I ſin-
'cerely pity the misfortunes to which
'you have reduced yourſelf, ſhould be
'glad to know, by what method you
'propoſe to extricate yourſelf from them,
'and what farther aſſiſtance you require
'from me, or is in my power to grant,
'without acting unbecoming of my cha-
'racter.

'I ſhould be utterly unworthy, an-

ſwered the other weeping, 'of the compaſ-
'ſion you have ſhewn, and even of the
'life you have preſerved, ſhould I
'entreat any thing of you, that might
'either injure your reputation, or pre-
'judice the good underſtanding between
'you and your brother: — As to my
'misfortunes, they are, alas! paſt re-
'medy; — I neither hope, nor ſhall en-
'deavour a reconciliation with mr.
'thoughtleſs: — I have long ſince been
'both aſhamed, and weary of the errors
'of my conduct, though I wanted
'ſtrength of reſolution to reform them;
'but be aſſured, madam, I have now
'no other wiſh than to paſs my future
'life in that only retreat for wretches
'like myſelf — a monaſtery.

Her ſtreaming eyes, — her moving accents, and above all, the ſeeming contrition ſhe expreſſed for her faults, raiſed ſuch a flow of tenderneſs in the ſoul of mrs. Munden, that ſhe reſolved from that inſtant, to do every thing in her power to ſerve her.

'As the religion of your country,' ſaid ſhe, 'and in which you were bred,
'affords a great number of thoſe ſafe
'and ſure aſylums for perſons who have
'made an ill uſe of their liberty, you
'cannot,

'cannot, indeed, do better than to fly 'to ſome one of them for refuge from 'temptations, which you have too much 'experienced the force of; and if you 'perſevere in this good diſpoſition, I 'will endeavour to procure the means of 'rendering you able to accompliſh ſo 'laudable a deſire.

'Ah, madam!' cried mademoiſelle de Roquelair, — 'it is all I aſk of heaven, 'or you; — the accidents of my life have 'convinced me, there can be no real 'happineſs without virtue, and that the 'moſt certain defence of virtue is religion: '— if I could now flatter myſelf with 'the means of being received within thoſe 'ſacred walls, from which the fatal love 'of mr. Thoughtleſs drew me, I ſhould 'think my guardian angel had not quite 'forſook me.'

On this, the good-natured believing mrs. Munden ſaid many kind things to her, — made her take ſome refreſhment, as ſhe lay in bed, in which ſhe adviſed her to continue ſome time, and endeavour to compoſe herſelf to ſleep, ſhe ſeeming to ſtand in need of it very much: — in going out of the chamber, ſhe told her ſhe would return in a few hours, but if ſhe wanted any thing in the mean time, on

her ringing a bell by her bed-ſide, a maid ſervant would immediately attend upon her.

She was, indeed, bent to try all poſſible methods for the accompliſhment of what ſhe promiſed; — 'How guilty ſoever 'this unhappy woman is,' ſaid ſhe within herſelf, '— my brother, in common 'juſtice, ought at leaſt to leave her in 'the ſame condition, in which he found 'her, — ſhe was then going to a nunnery, 'and it is now his duty to ſend her to 'one, for it cannot be expected her fa-'ther will make a ſecond offer of that 'ſort.'

With theſe reflections, together with others on the manner in which it would be moſt proper to addreſs mr. Thoughtleſs on this ſcore, was her mind taken up, till the hour ſhe imagined he might be ſtirring; — the diſturbances, which muſt neceſſarily have happened in his family the night before, made her ſuppoſe he might lie longer than uſual, but ſhe choſe rather to wait a while for his riſing, than hazard loſing the opportunity of ſpeaking to him, by his being gone abroad.

That gentleman had, in fact, paſſed the moſt diſagreeable night he had ever known: — he had loved mademoiſelle de Ro-

Roquelair with ſuch an extravagance of fondneſs, that he had ſometimes been even prompted by it to marry her, but the too great warmth of her conſtitution, and the known inconſtancy of her temper, as often deterred him from it, and alſo made him reſtrain her from many of thoſe liberties he would otherwiſe have allowed her; — he had thought himſelf no leſs ſecure of her perſon, than ſhe always pretended he was of her heart;— and now to find all his tenderneſs for her abuſed, all his precautions fruſtrated, might well raiſe in him paſſions of the moſt deſperate kind.

The inclinations of this woman were, in reality, too vicious to be bound by any obligations, or withheld from their gratifications, by any of the methods taken for that purpoſe: — ſhe loved variety, — ſhe longed for change, without conſulting whether the object was ſuitable or not;— the mercer had a perſon and addreſs agreeable enough; — he was of an amorous complexion, and readily improved the advances ſhe made him; he frequently came to her under the pretence of bringing patterns, ſilks, or other things in his way of trade; — and all this, as ſhe imagined, without raiſing any ſuſpicion in the family; — no interruption

happening in their repeated interviews, ſhe ſometimes kept him with her till near the hour, in which mr. Thoughtleſs uſually came home, which was ſeldom till one or two o'clock.

But on this unlucky night, it ſo fell out, that a very ill run of play, and the loſs of all the money he had about him, brought him home much ſooner than was his cuſtom; — a ſervant being at the door, prevented his knocking, ſo that the lovers had not the leaſt notice how near he was to them; — he went directly into his dreſſing-room, which was backwards on the ground floor, and ſat muſing for ſome time,—caſting up the ſums he had loſt, — curſing fortune within himſelf, and proteſting never to touch a card, or throw a dice again, when on a ſudden he was alarmed with the ſound of a man's voice laughing very heartily, — he ſtampt with his foot, and a ſervant immediately coming up, — 'Is there any company 'above?' demanded he haſtily:—'None, 'ſir, but the mercer, that comes to ma-'dam with ſilks,' replied the man — 'A 'mercer at this time of night,' cried mr. 'Thoughtleſs, — how long has he been 'here?' — 'I cannot tell, exactly, ſir,' ſaid he, 'but I believe, three or four 'hours: — 'A long viſit, and on bu-

'ſineſs

: ſineſs too!' reſumed mr. Thoughtleſs; and after a little pauſe, — 'Go,' continued he, 'bid mademoiſelle de Roque-'lair come down to me.'

If this unfaithful woman had been but miſtreſs of artifice enough to have made any one of the family her friend, ſhe would certainly have been told, that mr. Thoughtleſs was come home, and her gallant might eaſily have ſlipt out of the houſe, without his knowledge, — but on the contrary, her imperious behaviour towards them, ſet them all in general againſt her; — this fellow in particular, whom ſhe had uſed worſe than the reſt, rejoiced that his maſter was likely to find out what he wiſhed him to know, but never durſt acquaint him with.

On his going up ſtairs, he found they were ſhut in the bed-chamber, and running to his maſter with this account, — 'Locked in the chamber,' ſaid mr. Thoughtleſs, ſtarting up! — 'Yes, ſir,' anſwered the ſervant, 'and nobody would 'anſwer, though I knocked two or three 'times;' — which by the way, if he did at all, it was too ſoftly for them to hear.

'Confuſion!' cried mr. Thoughtleſs, now worked up to the higheſt pitch of

jealous rage, 'I'll try if they will open 'to me.'—With theſe words, he drew his ſword, and flew up ſtairs, burſt open the door, and ruſhed into the room with all the fury of an incenſed lion: — the aſtoniſhed guilty pair had neither thought nor means to eſcape; — the lover, on the firſt burſt of the door, jumped out of the window into the yard; — mademoiſelle run ſcreaming to one corner of the room; — 'Abandoned woman,' cried mr. Thoughtleſs, 'your puniſhment ſhall 'be the ſecond courſe';—then followed by his man with lights, ran in purſuit of the perſon who had injured him.

This unhappy woman not daring to ſtand the tempeſt of his rage, when he ſhould return, took the opportunity of his having quitted the chamber, to make her eſcape, — though at the time ſhe did ſo, as ſhe had truly told mrs. Munden, ſhe neither knew where, nor to whom ſhe ſhould apply for refuge.

The mercer, in the mean time, was found by mr. Thoughtleſs, but in a condition more exciting pity than revenge; the poor man had broke both his legs with his fall, and was otherwiſe very much hurt; but on ſeeing by whom, and in what manner he was approached, the terror

terror of immediate death made him exert all the ſtrength that was left in him, to cry out for pardon; which word he repeated over and over in the moſt lamentable tone that could be: — mr. Thoughtleſs, on this, turned haſtily away, bidding his ſervants raiſe and carry him into the hall, where a chair being preſently brought, he was put into it, and ſent home to make the beſt excuſe he could to his wife for the miſchief that had happened to him.

Every room was afterwards ſearched for mademoiſelle de Roquelair, but ſhe not being found, and a maid ſervant remembring, that in the midſt of the confuſion, the ſtreet-door had been left open, the flight of that lady was not to be doubted.

Though theſe diſturbances had taken up the greateſt part of the night, mr. Thoughtleſs was able to enjoy little repoſe after going to bed, and roſe rather ſooner than uſual; — he was up and dreſſed, when his ſiſter came, but was a good deal ſurprized to be told of her being there, as ſhe had never viſited him before without a formal invitation.

'Good morrow, my dear ſiſter', ſaid he,

he, as ſoon as ſhe was introduced, 'this 'is a favour quite unexpected; — pray 'what brings you abroad thus early?' — 'You men,' anſwered ſhe, 'who keep 'ſuch late hours, may well think it early; 'but for us women, who live more re-'gularly, it is no wonder to ſee us 'breathe the morning air: — but I aſſure 'you, I roſe ſomewhat ſooner than ordi-'nary to day, on your account; — 'On 'mine! — as how pray?' demanded he, 'I am come,' anſwered ſhe, to ſollicit in 'behalf of a perſon who has fallen un-'der your diſpleaſure, — mademoiſelle de 'Roquelair.

'Mademoiſelle de Roquelair!' cried he haſtily, interrupting her, 'what know-'ledge have you of that infamous crea-'ture?' — ſhe then ingenuouſly re-lated to him, how they had met by accident at the mercer's, — the offer ſhe had then made her of her friendſhip, and how, as ſhe ſuppoſed, emboldened by that miſtaken encouragement, ſhe had flown to her houſe for ſhelter the pre-ceding night: — 'You ſee how dangerous it is,' ſaid he, 'to make friendſhip at 'firſt ſight; but ſure the wretch cannot 'flatter herſelf with the leaſt diſtant hope 'of a reconciliation?'

'Far

'Far be it from me, ſir,' replied mrs. Munden, very gravely, 'to become the 'negotiator of ſuch a treaty, or even to 'attempt a vindication of her behaviour, '— no, it is your own honour, for 'which alone I am concerned, and that 'I think requires you ſhould ſend her to 'a monaſtery, ſince, as ſhe ſays, you de-'prived her of the opportunity of en-'tering into one.

'All meer pretence,' cried he; '— 'tis 'true, there was ſome talk of ſuch a 'thing, but ſhe has inclinations of a dif-'ferent ſort.' — To which mrs. Munden replied, 'that inclinations, though never 'ſo corrupt, might be reformed by rea-'ſon, adverſity, and experience; — that 'ſhe hoped her penitence was ſincere, 'and what before was her averſion, was 'now become her choice.' — She then urged the requeſt ſhe came upon, in terms ſo moving and pathetic, that mr. Thoughtleſs, irritated as he was, could not withſtand the energy of her words: — he told her he would conſider on what ſhe had ſaid, and give his anſwer the next day, but in the mean time deſired ſhe would adviſe her unworthy gueſt to ſend for her baggage immediately, ſaying,

ing, he would have nothing in his houſe, that ſhould remind him of her.

Mrs. Munden pretty well ſatisfied with having obtained thus much, took her leave, and returned to mademoiſelle de Roquelair, with an account of what ſhe had done.

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains a moſt ſhocking inſtance of infidelity and ingratitude.

MAdemoiſelle de Roquelair, on finding how far the good nature of mrs. Munden had made her intereſt herſelf in her behalf, expreſſed the tranſports of her gratitude in terms, which gave ſome pain to the modeſty of that lady to receive. — 'What I have done,' ſaid ſhe, 'is to promote the cauſe of virtue, and I 'hope my endeavours that way, will not 'be loſt on your account.' — 'You are 'all goodneſs,' replied the other, but I 'bluſh to think, that being already in-'debted for ſo many favours, I muſt ſtill become

'become your petitioner for more;—'though I have lived fifteen months in 'this town, I am a perfect ſtranger to 'the greateſt part of it,—quite unac-'quainted with its cuſtoms, and know 'not where, and in what manner to ad-'dreſs myſelf for lodgings;—in the 'midſt of my diſtractions, I found ſhelter 'under your hoſpitable roof;—may I 'preſume to flatter myſelf with the con-'tinuance of that charitable protection, 'till I receive an anſwer from mr. 'Thoughtleſs.'

Mrs. Munden paüſed a little at this requeſt, but thinking it would be cruel in this diſtreſs to have recourſe to ſtrangers, and to whom ſhe could communicate nothing of her mind, made this reply,—'Though it would be highly incon-'venient, madam,' ſaid ſhe, 'for you to 'remain in my houſe for any length of 'time, yet as, in all probability, your 'affairs will be determined in a few 'days, I would not have you think of 'leaving me, till you are prepared to 'leave the kingdom;—pleaſe therefore,' continued ſhe, 'to make an inventory of 'what things you have at my brother's, 'and I will give orders for their being 'brought directly hither.'

Mademoiſelle

Mademoiſelle de Roquelair was beginning to give ſome freſh teſtimonies of the ſenſe ſhe had of this laſt obligation, but mrs. Munden would not ſuffer her to proceed, and pointing to a ſtandiſh that ſtood on the table, deſired her to write the memorandum ſhe had mentioned; — 'Obedience, madam, is better than ſacri-'fice,' ſaid the other, and immediately did as ſhe was directed; — after which, mrs. Munden went down to give the orders ſhe had promiſed.

She ſent this inventory by her own man, and inſtructed him to procure perſons for bringing thither every thing belonging to mademoiſelle de Roquelair; but as this could not be done, and that lady dreſs'd, before the hour of dining, which was juſt at hand, ſhe judg'd it improper ſhe ſhould appear at table, till ſhe could do ſo with greater decency; — ſhe therefore bid one of the maids prepare ſomething apart, and ſerve it up to her in her own chamber.

She then began to conſider what ſhe ſhould ſay to mr. Munden in relation to this affair; — ſhe knew not but he might already be apprized of what had paſſed, or if even he were not ſo, ſhe thought it would

would be impoſſible to keep her in the houſe without his privity, — ſo reſolved to be quite open in the affair.

She was right in her conjecture, — mademoiſelle de Roquelair had happen'd to ring the bell for ſomething ſhe wanted; — mr. Munden hearing it, and knowing his wife was abroad, aſked who was above, and this queſtion occaſioned the man, who was then dreſſing him, to give him an account, as far as was in his power to do, of the laſt night's accident.

This a little ſurprized him, yet not enough to keep him from the park, where he conſtantly walked every day an hour or two before dinner; but on his return, he immediately interrogated his wife, concerning her new gueſt: on which ſhe told him, without the leaſt reſerve, every circumſtance of this tranſaction: — he liſtened attentively to what ſhe ſaid, but teſtified neither any diſlike, or approbation of her conduct in this reſpect: — he ſaid no more to her after ſhe had done ſpeaking, but behaved with the ſame ſullen ſilence he had always done ſince her adventure with Lord * * * *, and as ſoon as dinner was over, went out to paſs the remainder of the day, and beſt part of the night, according to cuſtom.

Mrs.

Mrs. Munden's good nature would not ſuffer her to go abroad the whole afternoon, — ſhe paſſed all the hours till bedtime, with mademoiſelle de Roquelair, and did every thing in her power, both to comfort her in the affliction ſhe was under, and to fortify her in the good reſolution ſhe ſeemed to have taken: — the next morning ſhe received, as ſhe expected, the following billet from her brother.

To mrs. MUNDEN.

" Dear ſiſter.

" IN compliance with your deſires, and " to be certain of getting eternally " rid of the ſight of a woman who has ſo " much abuſed the kindneſs I had for " her, I conſent to grant her requeſt of " being enabled to go into a monaſtery: " a friend of mine has great dealings with " a merchant at Boulogne, — I will ſee " him this afternoon, and pay into his " hands the ſum which I am told is ſuf- " ficient for that purpoſe: — if you give " yourſelf the trouble to call on me to- " morrow morning, I will give you his " order for her receiving it on her ar- " rival. — I cannot think of entering

" your

" your houſe, while ſhe is in it, but am " always,

" Dear ſiſter,

' Your affectionate brother,

" T. THOUGHTLESS."

Mrs. Munden having imparted the contents of this epiſtle to mademoiſelle de Roquelair, ſhe ſeemed as much content, as a perſon in her circumſtances could be; ſhe dined below that day, and mr. Munden treated her with the ſame politeneſs and complaiſance he always uſed towards perſons, over whom he had no power.

The next morning did not fail of carrying his fair wife to her brother's, about the hour, in which ſhe imagined he would expect her, but on the moment of her entrance, ſhe had the mortification of being accoſted by him in theſe terms, ' My dear ſiſter, ſaid he,' ' I was juſt go- ' ing to ſend to you, to prevent your gi- ' ving yourſelf this needleſs trouble. — ' The gentleman I went to is out of town, ' and will not return theſe two days; ſo ' nothing can be done in this woman's ' affair till he comes back.' — She told him ſhe was extremely ſorry, ' becauſe

ſaid

ſhe, 'delays are ſometimes dangerous: 'but I hope, my dear brother, no ſecond 'conſiderations will make you fruſtrate 'the good intentions of this unhappy pe-'nitent. — No, no,' cried he, 'I wiſh 'ſhe may perſevere in them, as ſted-'faſtly as I ſhall to the promiſe I have 'made.' Satisfied with this aſſurance, ſhe took her leave, little ſuſpecting, while ſhe was labouring with all her might in this good office, that cruel and ungenerous return, which was about to be made for her compaſſion.

Mr. Munden had ſeen mademoiſelle de Roquelair no more than once, but that once was ſufficient to make him become enamoured; — her beauty fired him, — the known wantonneſs of her inclinations encouraged him, — he ſcarce doubted of ſucceſs, but in caſe of failure, and if ſhe ſhould even acquaint his wife with his attempt, her character furniſhed him with the pretence of having made it only to try how far her converſion was ſincere.

He therefore heſitated not a moment if he ſhould endeavour the accompliſhments of his deſires, and for the doing ſo, no time was to be loſt, as ſhe was ſo ſuddenly to depart. Mrs. Munden was no ſooner gone out, than he went ſoftly up

up ſtairs to the chamber of this too lovely and leſs more virtuous ſtranger; ſhe was ſitting in a penſive poſture, leaning her head upon her hand, when he came in, but roſe to receive him with that reſpect, which ſhe thought due from her to the huſband of her protectreſs.

After the ſalutations of the morning were over, 'Is it poſſible,' cried he, taking one of her hands, and looking earneſtly on her face, 'that ſuch youth, ſuch 'beauty, charms in ſuch profuſion, ſhould 'be condemned to a cloyſter! — no, it 'can never be, — all the powers of love 'and pleaſure, forbid you to make ſo un-'natural a choice.' — Tranſported and amazed at hearing him ſpeak in this manner, ſhe could not forbear telling him with her eyes, that her thoughts correſponded with his words, but willing her tongue ſhould preſerve the decency of the character ſhe had aſſumed, at leaſt till he ſhould make a farther declaration of his ſentiments; — 'If I were indeed, anſwered ſhe, 'all that can be deſcribed 'of beautiful, I could not ſure be an of-'fering too amiable for heaven.'

'Heaven never gave you theſe per-'fections,' reſumed he, 'to be concealed 'in a dark, loneſome cell; — thoſe melting

'ing lips of yours were never formed to 'kiſs the feet of a cold lifeleſs image, or 'pour forth oraiſons to unhearing ſaints, 'but to make bleſt ſome warm — ſome 'happy he, who knows, and has the 'power of returning the raptures they 'beſtow. — Theſe laſt words were attended with ſuch vehement and repeated preſſures of the lips he praiſed, as left her no room to doubt the aim of his deſires, as did the manner of receiving them, alſo convince him of his ſucceſs.

'But are you in earneſt reſolved to be a 'nun?' replied he: 'Since fate will have 'it ſo,' replied ſhe, with a deep ſigh, and a look ſo languiſhing, and ſo ſweet, as pierced his very ſoul: — 'Make me 'your fate then,' cried he impatiently, — 'be mine, and not all the ſaints in the 'kalender ſhall ſnatch you from me;' — 'You are then, you muſt be my fate,' ſaid ſhe, 'returning his embrace with 'equal eagerneſs, — 'you have the pow-'er of fate, and are no leſs reſiſtleſs, — 'henceforth I'll ſeek no other heaven, 'but your love, your breaſt my altar, 'and your arms my cell.'

It will be eaſily ſuppoſed, that after this, ſhe refuſed no liberties he thought fit to take: — nothing but the laſt favour

vour was wanting to compleat his wiſhes, and to that he would not venture to proceed, for fear of an interruption, but they agreed to meet at the Portugueſe ambaſſador's chapel at ſix o'clock that ſame evening. Mutual kiſſes and embraces having ſealed the covenant, he went down to dreſs, and left her to compoſe her countenance againſt mrs. Munden's return.

This very wicked woman, who had never any real thoughts of going into a monaſtery, and only intended to appropriate the money ſhe expected from mr. Thoughtleſs, to ſuch uſes as might induce ſome man of fortune to make choice of her for a miſtreſs, now gave herſelf little pain, whether he granted her requeſt or not, imagining ſhe had found in mr. Munden all ſhe wiſhed for, or could hope in a gallant.

She affected, however, to mrs. Munden, to be under ſome concern for this delay of her intended journey, but ſaid, ſhe would employ the time ſhe ſtaid, in ſuch acts of devotion, as ſhould beſt prepare her to become a member of that ſacred ſociety, which ſhe ſoon hoped to be among: 'I have not been,' added ſhe, 'for a long time at confeſſion, but I

'will go this afternoon, and eaſe my 'conſcience of its load of guilt.'

Thus impiouſly did ſhe prophane the name of religion, by making it the veil to cover the moſt ſhameful depravities of nature. — On the arrival of the appointed hour, with looks of ſanctity, and a heart full of impurity, ſhe haſted to the place of rendezvous; the punctual mr. Munden waited for her at the chapel door, and conducted her where they had all the freedom they could wiſh of indulging their vicious inclinations.

They broke off this firſt amorous intercourſe much ſooner than either of them deſired; mademoiſelle de Roquelair not being able to find a plauſible excuſe to make to mrs. Munden for ſtaying beyond the time, which her pretended devotions might be reaſonably ſuppoſed to take up; but to attone for this misfortune, a ſtratagem was contrived between them, not only for their meeting next day, but alſo for their continuing together a much longer time, — it was this.

She told mrs Munden, that the reverend father, to whom ſhe had confeſſed, informed her, that a young lady of a very worthy family in England, having paſſed her

her year of probation at a monaſtery at Bologne, and returned hither only to take an eternal leave of her friends, and of the world, was now juſt ready to go back, in order to be initiated: — 'To this fa-'mily,' added ſhe, 'the good father has 'offered to introduce me tomorrow, and 'if the young lady approves of my being 'the companion of her voyage, as he aſ-'ſures me ſhe certainly will, how happy 'ſhall I think myſelf.'

The truth of all this not being ſuſpected by mrs. Munden, ſhe congratulated her upon it; it is eaſy to deceive the innocent, — but it muſt be owned, this wicked woman had ſubtilty enough to have impoſed on a perſon more ſkilled in the artifices of the world, than was the amiable lady on whom ſhe practiſed it.

But not to detain the reader's attention on ſo ungrateful a ſubject, I ſhall only ſay, that one aſſignation was ſtill productive of another, and the credulity of the injured wife ſerved only as a matter of mirth to the tranſgreſſing huſband, and his guilty partner.

But now the time was come when theſe ſubterfuges muſt neceſſarily be at an end,

or become too groſs not to be ſeen thro'. Mr. Thoughtleſs had ſeen his friend, — had paid the money into his hands, and received a bill from him on the merchant at Bologne; when he delivered it to mrs. Munden, — 'Siſter,' ſaid he, 'this paper will entitle your gueſt to the 'receipt of three hundred louis-d'ors, on 'her arrival at Bologne, but I expect you 'will oblige her to depart immediately, 'for it is neither conſiſtent with your re-'putation to keep her in your houſe, 'nor with my peace of mind, that ſhe 'ſhould continue in the kingdom.' To which ſhe replied with a ſmile, 'That 'there was nothing more certain than that 'his commands in this point would be 'punctually obeyed.'

This lady was rejoiced at having accompliſhed what ſhe thought ſo good a work; but having perceived in mademoiſelle de Roquelair ſome abatement of her firſt eagerneſs for a religious life, ſhe thought proper on giving her the bill to repeat to her the words her brother had ſaid on that account; to which the other cooly anſwered, 'Your brother, madam, 'need be under no apprehenſions of my 'offending him in this point, or giving 'you any farther trouble.'

This

This, though no more than what the lovers expected, was yet a dreadful ſhock to them both: great part of the time they were together that evening, was taken up in talking of it; mademoiſelle de Roquelair proteſted, that death was leſs cruel than being torn from her dear Munden thus early, — thus in the infancy of their happineſs; and gave ſome hints, that ſhe wiſhed he would hire private lodgings for her; but ſhe knew little of the temper of the man ſhe had to deal with: — he loved her as a miſtreſs, but hated the expence of keeping her as a miſtreſs, he therefore evaded all diſcourſe on that head, and told her that he fancied that by pretences, ſuch as already had been made, ſhe might ſtill continue in the houſe, — 'means at leaſt,' ſaid he, 'may 'be found out to protract our mutual 'misfortune, and give us more time to 'conſider what we have to do.'

She agreed, however, to make the experiment, and poor mrs. Munden was impoſed upon by ſome new invention from one day to another, for upwards of a week, but at laſt beginning to fear there was ſomething more at the bottom of theſe delays than was pretended, and her brother having ſent twice in that time, to

know if his deſires had been complied with, ſhe reſolved at once to put a period to inconveniences, which ſhe thought ſhe could ſo eaſily get rid of.

Mademoiſelle de Roquelair having ſtayed abroad extremely late one night, ſhe took the opportunity of her having done ſo, of ſpeaking more plainly to her than her good-nature and complaiſance had hitherto permitted her to do; — ſhe went up to her chamber next morning, and with an air which had ſomething of ſeverity in it, — 'You keep odd hours, 'madam,' ſaid ſhe, 'for a perſon who 'affects to be ſo great a penitent; but I 'ſuppoſe you are now prepared to eaſe 'me of all concern on your account: — 'I ſhall trouble you no longer,' cried the other, 'till the young lady I told you 'of is ready to depart.' — 'You will do 'well,' reſumed mrs. Munden, 'to re-'main with her till ſhe is ſo, for, ma-'dam, I muſt inſiſt on your removal 'hence this day.' — 'You will not turn 'me out of doors?' cried mademoiſelle de Roquelair. — 'I hope you will not 'oblige me to an act, ſo contrary to 'my nature,' replied mrs. Munden. — 'Say rather contrary to your power,' returned that audacious woman, and coming up to her with the moſt unparelelled

aſſurance,

aſſurance, 'This houſe, which you for-
'bid me,' purſued ſhe, 'I think mr.
'Munden is the maſter of, and I ſhall
'therefore continue in it till my conve-
'nience call me from it, or he ſhall tell
'me I am no longer welcome.'

Impoſſible is it to deſcribe, and difficult even to conceive mrs. Munden's aſtoniſhment at theſe words: — to hear a woman thus doubly loaded with guilt and obligations,—a woman, who but a few days paſt had been proſtrate at her feet, imploring pity and protecttion, now all at once ungratefully contemning the benefits ſhe had received, and inſolently defying the authority to which ſhe had flown for ſhelter;—all this muſt certainly give a ſhock almoſt beyond the ſtrength of human reaſon to ſuſtain. — 'Mr. Munden,' cried the injured fair one, with a voice hardly intelligible, 'Mr. Munden!' ſhe could utter no more, but flew down ſtairs with ſuch rapidity that her feet ſcarce touched the ſteps.

Mr. Munden was not quite ready to go out, — ſhe found him in his dreſſing-room, and throwing herſelf into a chair, half ſuffocated with paſſion, related to him, as well as ſhe was able, the manner

in which ſhe had been treated; to which he replied, with a good deal of peeviſhneſs, 'Prithee do not trouble me with 'theſe idle ſtories, — Mademoiſelle de 'Roquelair is your gueſt, — I have no 'concern in your little quarrels.' — 'I 'hope,' ſaid ſhe, 'you will do me that 'juſtice which every wife has a right to 'expect, and convince that French hy-'pocrite, that I am too much the miſ-'treſs of this houſe for any one to re-'main in it without my permiſſion.' — 'So you would make me the dupe of 'your reſentment,' reſumed he ſcornfully, 'but poſitively I ſhall not do a 'rude thing to oblige you, or any body 'elſe.' — In ſpeaking theſe words, having now adjuſted his dreſs, he flung out of the room, without giving her time to add any thing farther on a ſubject he was wholly unprepared to anſwer.

What perplexing whirl of wild imaginations muſt ſuch a behaviour from a huſband excite in a wife, conſcious of having done nothing to provoke it: — happy was it for her that love had the leaſt ſhare in her reſentment; — all her indifference could not enable her to ſupport, with any degree of patience, ſo palpable a contempt; — ſhe returned directly

rectly to her own chamber, where ſhutting herſelf up, ſhe gave a looſe to agitations too violent for words to repreſent.

CHAP. XIX.

Relates ſuch things as the reader will doubtleſs think of very great importance, yet will hereafter be found of much greater than he can at preſent imagine.

AFTER this much-injured wife had vented ſome part of the overflowing paſſions of her ſoul in tears and exclamations, ſhe began to conſider with more calmneſs, in what manner ſhe ought to behave in ſo amazing a circumſtance; — She had not the leaſt propenſity in her nature to jealouſy, yet ſhe could not think that any thing leſs than a criminal correſpondence between her huſband and this French woman, could induce the one, or embolden the other, to act as they had done towards her.

'Neither divine, nor human laws,' ſaid ſhe, 'nor any of thoſe obligations 'by which I have hitherto looked upon 'myſelf as bound, can now compel me 'any longer to endure the cold neglects, 'the inſults, the tyranny of this moſt 'ungrateful — moſt perfidious man. — I 'have diſcharged the duties of my ſta-'tion; I have fully proved I know how 'to be a good wife, if he had known 'how to be even a tolerable huſband: 'wherefore then ſhould I heſitate to take 'the opportunity, which this laſt act of 'baſeneſs gives me, of eaſing myſelf of 'that heavy yoke I have laboured under 'for ſo many cruel months.'

She would not, however, do any thing precipitately; it was not ſufficient ſhe thought that ſhe ſhould be juſtified to herſelf; ſhe was willing alſo to be juſtified in the opinion of her friends: her brother was the firſt perſon to be conſulted, ſhe reſolved therefore to go immediately to him, but as it was neceſſary to put ſome things in order before her departure, in caſe ſhe ſhould return no more, ſhe called the maid, who always waited on her in her chamber, to aſſiſt her on this occaſion.

She locked up her jewels, and what other trinkets ſhe had of value in an amber cabinet, and made her wearing apparel be alſo diſpoſed of in proper utenſils, leaving out only ſome linnen, and other neceſſaries for the preſent uſe, which ſhe alſo cauſed to be pack'd up.—The poor maid, who loved her miſtreſs dearly, and eaſily gueſſed the meaning of theſe preparations, could not refrain weeping all the time ſhe was thus employed;—'Ah, 'madam,' cried ſhe, 'what a ſad thing 'it is that married gentlemen will be ſo 'fooliſh! — hang all the French, I ſay.' '— What do'ſt mean, Jenny, ſaid mrs. Munden?' — ah, madam, replied ſhe, 'I 'ſhould have told you before, but that 'I was afraid of making you uneaſy; 'but ſince I find you know how things 'are, I ſhall make no ſecret of it: — 'you may remember, madam, that you 'gave me leave laſt monday to go to 'ſee my ſiſter, — ſhe lives in St. Martin's lane, — it would have been nearer 'for me, indeed, to have gone through 'the Mews, but I know not how it 'happened, I went by Charing-Croſs, 'and juſt as I was going to croſs the 'way, who ſhould I ſee pop out of a 'hackney coach, but my maſter and this 'French woman; — they hurried toge-

'ther

'ther, arm in arm, into a bagnio, — and 'you know, madam, ſome of thoſe pla-'ces have but an ugly name; — for my 'part I was ſo confounded, that I ſcarce 'knew whether I ſtood upon my head, 'or my heels; but I did not ſay a 'word of what I had ſeen when I came 'home, till juſt now John came down, 'and told us all how that wicked woman 'had afronted you.'

Mrs. Munden then recollected, that mr. Munden's man was in the room, when ſhe related the behaviour of mademoiſelle de Roquelair, which ſhe now was not ſorry for, nor of the freſh proof given her by this maid of the perfidy of her huſband.

'Well, Jenny,' ſaid ſhe, 'I am not 'yet determined how I ſhall proceed; — 'I am going to my brother's, and ſhall 'take Tom with me, — if I do not come 'back to night, he ſhall bring you in-'ſtructions what things to ſend me; — 'but in the mean time, ſay nothing to 'your maſter of what we have been talk-'ing.'

Mrs. Munden could not forbear ſhedding tears as ſhe was going into her chair, at the thoughts of this exile, voluntary

as

as it was, from a houſe ſhe had ſo much right to call her own; but the poor maid roard out ſo loud at ſeeing her depart, that it brought all the ſervants out of the kitchen to know what was the matter, which being told by Jenny, occaſioned ſo general a grief among them, for the loſs of ſo good a miſtreſs, that had mademoiſelle de Roquelair remained in the houſe, and the ſame ſervants alſo been continued, it is poſſible ſhe would have had little either of reſpect, or obedience from them.

But fortune ſpared this mortification, in order to inflict a much greater one on her ingratitude and treachery. — Mr. Munden had not quitted the preſence of his wife many minutes before he began to reflect ſeriouſly on this accident; — he found it might prove a very vexatious one if the conſequences it ſeem'd to threaten were not in time prevented: — he highly blamed mademoiſelle de Roquelair for her behaviour to mrs. Munden, not ſo much becauſe it might give that lady room to ſuſpect in what manner he had wronged her, as becauſe it plainly ſhewed, that the other intended to pin herſelf upon him, and oblige him to ſupport her; a thing which did not at all ſuit with his humour: — he had gratified his paſſion almoſt to a ſurfeit; — a very

very little longer time would have made him as heartily wiſh to get rid of her, as ever he had done to gain her; and though it could not be ſaid he was as yet altogether cloyed with the pleaſures ſhe ſo laviſhly beſtowed, yet a little examination into the extent of his inclinations, convinced him, that he could bear the loſs of her for ever without pain.

While the blood runs high, and deſire is rampant for poſſeſſion, prudence is of little force; but when the one begins to flag, the other reſumes its empire over the mind, and never reſts till it finds means to retrieve what it has loſt: — he could now conſider, that the money remitted to Bologne by mr. Thoughtleſs, could be received by nobody but mademoiſelle de Roquelair herſelf, and that it was probable, that gentleman, if told the uſage had been given his ſiſter, might be provoked to recall his order, and prevent the payment of it at all; — this ſeemed, however, a plauſible pretence for perſuading her to go away directly, and alſo for making a merit to his wife of what he did.

Having fully determined within himſelf how to proceed in this affair, he ſhortned his morning's walk, and came home ſome

ſome hours before the uſual time: — he was at firſt a little fretted on being told mrs. Munden was gone to her brother's, not doubting but the errand on which ſhe went, was to complain of the treatment ſhe had received; but Jenny carefully concealing what her miſtreſs had ſaid to her, concerning her intentions of coming back no more, he paſſed it lightly over, imagining her accuſations and reproaches would ceaſe, the object of them being once removed.

He found no diffi- y in prevailing on mademoiſelle de Koquelair to go to Bologne. — Three hundred louis d'ors was too tempting a ſum to be forfeited meerly for the want of a little jaunt, eſpecially as ſhe conſidered, that ſhe might accompliſh her buſineſs there, and return to London within the compaſs of a very few days, and he told her, that he would hire lodgings for her againſt her coming back.

'Well then, my angel,' ſaid he, 'no 'time is to be loſt; — as this is not poſt 'day, if you ſet out immediately for 'Dover, you may be at Bologne, and 'have received the money before any 'letter can reach that place to prevent it, 'for it is very likely that the ſpite my

'wife

'wife has towards you, may work upon 'the reſentment of her brother to at-'tempt ſuch a thing.' — Every thing being concluded upon for this expedition, he went himſelf to procure a poſt-chaiſe, appointing her to meet him at a place he mentioned to her in an hour at fartheſt.

As he had promiſed to ſend all her baggage to the lodgings which he ſhould provide for her reception, ſhe had nothing to do [illegible] pack up ſome few neceſſaries to [illegible] with her. This little work being ſoon over, a hackney coach carried her to the houſe that had been agreed upon, where ſhe ſaw a poſt-chaiſe already at the door, and the diligent mr. Munden waiting for her coming: — as ſhe propoſed to reach Canterbury that ſame night, and it was then paſt two o'clock, the lovers were obliged to take a very haſty leave.

This double deceitful man, having a farther view in what he did than ſhe had any notion of, told her at parting, that it would be proper for her to ſtay at Bologne till ſhe received a letter from him with an account in what ſtreet, and part of the town, the lodgings he ſhould provide for her were ſituated, to the end

ſhe

ſhe might come directly into them on her arrival; — he ſpoke this with an air ſo full of tenderneſs and care for her repoſe, that ſhe had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of his drift, and replied, that ſhe would not fail to do as he adviſed, but deſired he would be as ſpeedy as poſſible in writing to her; — 'for,' cried ſhe, embracing him, 'I ſhall think every day a 'year till I return to the arms of my dear 'Munden.'

Having thus in reality diſcarded his miſtreſs, though without her knowing he had done ſo, he went home, in order to boaſt to his wife of the complaiſance he had ſhewn to her in this affair, but finding ſhe was not yet come back, he called for her maid, and bid her tell her the moment ſhe ſhould return, that he had complied with her requeſt, and made the French woman go out of the houſe.

After having ſaid this, he went out again, and came not home till late at night, when he was confounded beyond meaſure on finding a letter from mrs. Munden, which had been left for him by her own footman in the beginning of the evening, and contained theſe lines.

To

To mr. Munden.

'Sir,

'AS you cannot but be ſenſible, that 'the mutual engagements between 'us have been ſtrictly adhered to on my 'part, and almoſt in every particular fal- 'ſified on yours, you ought not to be ſur- 'priſed, that I have at laſt reſolved to 'put a final end to a way of life ſo un- 'pleaſing in the eyes of heaven, and ſo 'diſagreeable to ourſelves; —it never 'was in my power to make you truly 'happy, nor in your will to make me 'even tolerably eaſy; —I therefore fly 'for ever from your ill uſage, and once 'more put myſelf under the protection 'of my friends, to whom I alſo ſhall 'commit the care of ſettling with you 'the terms of our ſeparation, which being 'once agreed upon, you will not be 'troubled either with the complaints, or 'the reproaches, of

'Your much injured wife,

B. MUNDEN.

'P. S. I have removed nothing out of 'your houſe but what was my own 'before marriage.'

Upon enquiring farther into the matter, he was informed that mrs. Munden had indeed removed a large India cheſt, a buroe cabinet dreſſing-table, and in fine, every thing that belonged immediately to herſelf, and alſo that his family was now reduced to two, her own man and maid having followed her.

All this convincing him how much ſhe was in earneſt, involved him in the moſt perplexing cogitations; — not that he regretted the parting with her through any remains of affection, or that his harden'd heart was touched with a juſt ſenſibility of her merit, or with any repentance of his ill treatment of her, but that he knew ſuch an affair muſt neceſſarily be attended with ſome noiſe and confuſion, and in many reſpects give him a good deal of embaraſſment: — it was therefore theſe two laſt reaſons, which alone determined him to make uſe of all his artifice to bring about a ſecond reconciliation.

That beautiful lady in the mean time had thoughts much more compoſed; — her brother had received her in the moſt affectionate manner, — had approved of her conduct in regard to her unfaithful huſband, had — aſſured her of the continuance

nuance of his friendſhip and protection, and before ſhe could requeſt it of him, invited her, and ſuch of her ſervants as ſhe choſe ſhould attend her, to remain in his houſe as long as ſhe ſhould think fit. — He deſired her to take upon her the ſole command and management of his houſe and family, and aſſigned the beſt apartment for her particular uſe: — in fine, he omitted nothing that might convince her of a ſincere welcome.

On diſcourſing together concerning her obtaining a ſeparate maintenance, it was the opinion of them both, that mr. markland the lawyer ſhould be adviſed with, as he was a man who could not but be well experienced in ſuch affairs, and accordingly a ſervant was diſpatched to that gentleman, to deſire he would come to them the next day.

But though ſhe had reaſon to be highly ſatisfied with the reception given her by her brother, yet ſhe could not be quite eaſy till ſhe ſhould hear what judgment her dear lady Loveit would paſs on the ſtep ſhe had taken. — She went the next morning to pay a viſit at that lady's toylet, — ſhe related to her ſincerely every particular of the provocation ſhe had received, the manner in which ſhe had reſented

ſented it, and the reſolution ſhe had taken of living in an eternal ſtate of ſeparation from ſo bad a man; to which lady Loveit replied, that though ſhe was extremely ſorry for the occaſion, yet ſhe thought if ſhe had acted otherwiſe, it would have been an injuſtice not only to herſelf, but to all wives in general, by ſetting them an example of ſubmitting to things required of them neither by law nor nature.

This encouragement, from a lady of her known ſcrupulous diſpoſition, made mrs. Munden not doubt but ſhe ſhould be equally abſolved by lady Truſty, and her brother Frank, to both whom ſhe wrote an account that evening of all ſhe had done.

On her return from lady Loveit's, ſhe found a letter from mr. Munden in anſwer to that ſhe had ſent to him the day before: — the contents whereof were as follow.

To mrs. Munden.

'Madam,

'THE unaccountableneſs of your behaviour aſtoniſhes me! For heaven's ſake, how can you anſwer to your-

ſelf

'ſelf the having quitted your huſband's 'houſe for ſo trifling a pretence? — It is 'true, I did not at firſt give much regard 'to your complaint againſt mademoiſelle 'de Roquelair, but on conſidering it, I 'obliged her to depart immediately. — I 'do aſſure you, ſhe ſet out yeſterday for 'Dover, and I believe by this time is as 'far as Calais, on her way to Bologne, ſo 'that there now remains no excuſe for 'your abſenting yourſelf, and if you 'ſhould continue to do ſo, it will be a 'very plain proof, that you are extremely 'wanting in that duty and affection, 'which the laws both of God and man 'expect from you. — But I flatter my-'ſelf that is not the caſe, and therefore 'expect you will return with all poſſible 'expedition to him, who will be always 'ready to prove himſelf

'Your moſt affectionate huſband,

G. MUNDEN.

'P. S. I know not what you mean by 'ſettling terms of ſeparation; — a 'wife who elopes from her huſband, 'forfeits all claim to every thing that 'is his, and can expect nothing from 'him till ſhe returns to her obedience; 'but were it otherwiſe, and the law 'were entirely on your ſide in this 'point,

'point, you might be certain, that I 'look upon the happineſs of poſſeſſing 'you in too juſt a light to be eaſily 'brought into any agreement, that 'would deprive me of you.'

Though mr. Munden wanted not cunning in moſt things, yet in writing this epiſtle he ſeemed not to conſider the ſpirit, or the penetration of his wife, who, he might have known, had too great a ſhare of both, to be either intimidated by the majeſterial air of ſome of the expreſſions, or ſoothed by the fawning, unſincere compliments of the others.

This vain attempt therefore only ſerving to remind her of the many proofs ſhe had received both of his ill nature and deceit towards her, inſtead of weakening the reſolution ſhe had taken of not living with him again, rather rendered it more ſtrong and permanent.

CHAP. XX.

More of the ſame.

MR. Markland did not, like too many of his profeſſion, ever flatter his clients with an aſſurance of ſucceſs in any cauſe, of which himſelf was doubtful: — He plainly told mrs. Munden, that he feared not all the ill uſage ſhe had ſuſtained would be ſufficient to compel her huſband to allow her a ſeparate maintenance. — 'Honour and generoſity may 'indeed,' added he, 'oblige him to do 'that, which I am very apprehenſive the 'law will not enforce him to.'

'Alas,' cried mrs. Munden, burſting into tears, 'if I can have no relief but 'from his honour and generoſity, I muſt 'be miſerable.' — 'Not ſo, my dear 'ſiſter,' ſaid mr. Thoughtleſs, while you 'have a brother, who has it in his power 'to ſupport you againſt all the injuries of 'fortune, and the injuſtice of a huſband 'ſo unworthy of you.'

She

She thanked him in terms which ſo affectionate an offer demanded from her, but could not help appearing very much dejected at what mr. Markland had ſaid to her; on which, 'Madam,' ſaid he, 'though the letter of the law may not 'be altogether ſo favourable for you in 'this point, as you certainly deſerve, yet 'notwithſtanding that, and how refractory ſoever mr. Munden may be in his 'principles or diſpoſitions, I hope there 'may be means found to bring him to 'do you juſtice; — I will wait on him,— 'will talk to him in a proper manner, 'and do flatter myſelf with being able 'to give you a good account of what I 'have done.'

It is not to be doubted but both the brothers and the ſiſter earneſtly intreated he would exert all his abilities in an affair, which they eaſily ſaw would be difficult enough to manage; but the anſwers of this honeſt good natured gentleman ſoon convinced them, that there was no need of any perſuaſions to induce him to do every thing in his power for the ſervice of ill-treated innocence.

Mrs. Munden having told him, that about eleven o'clock was the moſt certain

time for her huſband to be ſpoke with, he went the next morning at that hour; on ſending up his name, mr. Munden gueſſed the errand on which he came, but that did not hinder him from ordering he ſhould be introduced, nor when he was ſo, from receiving him with that politeneſs he always uſed to ſtrangers.

Mr. Markland began with telling him he was extremely ſorry for the occaſion on which he waited on him that morning, 'I little imagined,' ſaid he, 'that 'when I drew up the articles for a union 'between you, ſir, and mrs. Munden, I 'ſhould ever have been employed in 'tranſacting a deed of ſeparation:— 'but ſince it has unhappily proved ſo, 'I hope at leaſt it may be done as ami-'cably as the nature of the thing will 'admit.'

Mr. Munden at firſt affected to treat this propoſal in a manner ſomewhat ludicrous, but perceiving it was not well taken by the other,—'You will pardon 'me, ſir,' cried he, I proteſt I am under 'the greateſt conſternation in the world, 'that my wife ſhould have the aſſurance 'to trouble a gentleman of your cha-'racter on ſo fooliſh an affair;— upon 'my

'my honour, ſir, there is nothing in it 'but meer whim, — caprice.'

'If I did not think it ſufficiently ſe-'rious,' replied mr. Markland, 'and 'were not alſo well convinced you will 'hereafter find it ſo, I ſhould not have 'given either myſelf, or you, the trouble 'of this viſit;' — but ſir, continued he, 'you may depend, that the lady's com-'plaints will have their weight.'

'All womaniſh ſpite, upon my ſoul, 'ſir,' reſumed mr. Munden; I 'defy her 'to accuſe me of any one action that 'can juſtify her quitting my houſe, much 'leſs to prove any real injury re-'ceived from me, without which you 'know, ſir, there can be no pretence for 'a ſeparation.'

'You cannot as yet, ſir, be ſenſible 'what is in her power to prove,' ſaid the lawyer, 'but God forbid this unhappy 'diſſention ſhould ever come to that, 'for admitting ſhe ſhould be wanting in 'ſuch proofs as the ſtrictneſs of the law 'requires in theſe caſes, the very at-'tempt muſt neceſſarily involve you in 'an infinity of diſquiet. — Conſider, ſir, purſued he, 'when the affairs of a family 'are laid open, and every diſpute be-

'tween the huſband and the wife ex-
'poſed before a court of judicature, or
'even in a petition to a lord chancellor,
'the whole becomes a public talk, and
'furniſhes a matter of ridicule for the
'unthinking ſcoffers of the Age.'

'I can eaſily prevent all this,' cried mr. Munden, haſtily, 'by procuring a
'warrant from the lord chief juſtice to
'force her immediately home. — 'You
'may certainly do ſo,' cried mr. Mark-
'land, with a half ſmile, — but, ſir, are
'you ſure of keeping her at home, when
'you have got her there? — Is it not in
'her power to leave you again the ſame
'day, — nay, even the ſame hour in
'which you compelled her to return? ſo
'that your whole time may be ſpent in
'an unavailing chaſe — ſomewhat of a
'piece with the fable of the Siſiphœan
'ſtone, which as often as the driver
'forced to the height he aimed at,
'rolled back to its beloved deſcent. —
'In fine, ſir, as mrs. Munden is deter-
'mined to live apart, you have no way
'to preſerve her but by confinement,
'and I appeal to your own judgment
'how that would look in the eyes of the
'world, and what occaſion for complaint
'it would afford to all her friends, who

'would

'would doubtleſs have a ſtrict watch on 'your behaviour.'

Theſe words threw mr. Munden into a deep reſverie, which the other would not interrupt, being willing to ſee how far this laſt remonſtrance had worked upon him, till coming out of it, and vexed that he had ſhewn any diſcompoſure, — 'Well ſir,' ſaid he, if ſhe reſolves to per-'ſiſt in this obſtinacy. let her enjoy her 'humour, I ſhall give myſelf no pain 'about it, — but ſhe muſt not expect I 'ſhall allow one penny towards her 'maintenance.'

It was on this head, that mr. Markland found he had occaſion to employ all the rhetoric he was maſter of: — he urged the unreaſonableneſs, the injuſtice, the cruelty of denying the means of ſubſiſtance to a lady whoſe whole fortune he enjoyed; — ſaid, ſuch a thing was altogether unprecedented among perſons of condition; and to prove what he alledged, produced many inſtances of wives, who on parting from their huſbands, were allowed a proviſion proportionable to the ſums they had brought in marriage.

All theſe arguments were enforced in terms ſo ſtrong, and ſo pathetic, that mr.

Munden could make no other anſwer than, — that he did not deſire to part, that it was her own fault, and that if ſhe would not return to her duty, ſhe ought to be ſtarved into a more juſt ſenſe of it; and that he was very ſure the law would not compel him to do any thing for her; on which, mr. Markland again reminded him of the vexation, the fatigue, the diſgrace, with which a ſuit commenced by either party muſt be attended, in whoſe favour ſoever the deciſion ſhould be made.

He talked ſo long on this ſubject, that Mr. Munden, either to get rid of him, or becauſe he was really uncertain what to do, at laſt told him, that he would conſider on what he had been ſaying, and let him know his reſolution in a week's time. — Mr. Markland then replied, that he would trouble him no farther for the preſent, and after having prefixed a day for waiting on him again, took his leave.

The mind of mr. Munden was indeed in the utmoſt confuſion amidſt that variety of vexatious incidents which he had now to ſtruggle with, — the little probability he found there was of re-eſtabliſhing himſelf in the favour of his patron, — the loſs of all his hopes that way, — the ſudden

ſudden departure of a wife, whom, tho' he had no affection for, he looked upon as a neceſſary appendix to his houſe, — the noiſe her having taken ſuch a ſtep would make in the town, the apprehenſions of being obliged to grant her a ſeparate maintenance, all theſe things put together, it is certain were ſufficient to overwhelm a man of a leſs impatient temper.

He curſed his amour with the French woman, as having been the cauſe of this laſt misfortune falling on him, and to prevent all farther trouble on her account, ordered, that the luggage ſhe had left behind ſhould be immediately put on board a veſſel, and ſent after her to Bologne; he alſo wrote to her at the ſame time, acquainting her with the diſturbance which had happened, and that it was highly neceſſary for his future peace, that he ſhould ſee her no more, nor even hold any correſpondence with her.

Mrs. Munden in the mean time was far from being perfectly eaſy, though mr. Markland gave her hopes that her huſband would very ſpeedily be brought to ſettle things between them in a reaſonable way, and her brother was every day giving her freſh aſſurances of his friendſhip

and protection, whether that event prov'd favourable or not; yet all this was not enough to quel ſome ſcruples, which now roſe in her mind; — the violence of that paſſion, which had made her reſolve to leave mr. Munden being a little evaporated, the vows ſhe had made to him at the altar were continually in her thoughts; — ſhe could not quite aſſure herſelf, that a breach of that ſolemn covenant was to be juſtified by any provocations; nor whether the worſt uſage on the part of the huſband could authorize reſentment in that of a wife.

She was one day diſburdening her diſquiets on this ſcore to her dear lady Loveit, in terms which made that lady ſee more than ever ſhe had done before, the height of her virtue, and the delicacy of her ſentiments, when ſir Baſil came haſtily into the room with a paper in his hand, and after paying his compliments to mrs. Munden, 'My dear,' ſaid he to his lady, 'I have very agree-'able news to tell you, — I have juſt re-'ceived a letter from my brother True-'worth, which informs me, that he is 'upon the road, and we ſhall have him 'with us this evening.' — I am ex-'tremely glad,' replied ſhe, 'and like-'wiſe that he is ſo good to let us know

'it,

it, that I may make ſome little preparations for his welcome.

Mrs. Munden could not be told that mr. Trueworth was ſo near, and might preſently be in the ſame room with her, without the utmoſt confuſion, which ſhe fearing would be obſerved, laid hold of the pretence lady Loveit's laſt words furniſhed her with, of taking her leave, and riſing haſtily up, 'I will wait on your la-'dyſhip,' ſaid ſhe, 'at a more conve-'nient time, for I perceive you are now 'going to be buſy.' — 'Not at all, replied the other, 'three words will ſerve 'for all the inſtructions I have to give, 'therefore, prithee, dear creature, ſit 'down.' — In ſpeaking theſe words, ſhe took hold of one of her hands, and ſir Baſil of the other, in order to replace her on the ſettee ſhe had juſt quitted, but ſhe reſiſting their efforts, and deſiring to be excuſed ſtaying any longer, — 'I pro-'teſt,' cried lady Loveit, 'this ſudden 'reſolution of leaving us would make 'one think you did it to avoid mr. True-'worth, and if that be the caſe, I muſt 'tell you, that you are very ungrateful, 'as he always expreſſes the greateſt re-'gard for you.' — 'Aye, aye, ſaid ſir Baſil, laughing, 'old love cannot be for-'got: I have heard him utter many ten-

'der things of the charming miſs Betſy 'Thoughtleſs, even ſince his marriage 'with my ſiſter.

'I ought not then,' replied ſhe, 'to 'increaſe the number of the obligations 'I have to him by that compaſſion, 'which I know he would beſtow on my 'preſent diſtreſs; but I aſſure you, ſir 'Baſil, I would not quit you, and my 'dear lady Loveit, thus abruptly, if 'ſome letters I have to write, and other 'affairs, which require immediate diſ-'patch, did not oblige me to it.'

On this, they would not offer to detain her, and ſhe went home to give a looſe to thoſe agitations, which the mention of mr. Trueworth always involved her in.

CHAP. XXI.

Affords variety of amuſements.

MRS. Munden was ſo ignorant of her own heart, in relation to what it felt on mr. Trueworth's account, that ſhe imagined ſhe had only fled his preſence becauſe

becauſe ſhe could not bear a man who had courted her ſo long, ſhould ſee her thus unhappy by the choice ſhe had made of another.

'I am well aſſured, cried ſhe, 'that 'he has too much generoſity to triumph 'in my misfortune, and too much com- 'plaiſance to remind me of the cauſe; '—yet would his eyes tacitly reproach 'my want of judgment, —and mine too 'might perhaps, in ſpite of me, confeſs, as 'the poet ſays, that

"I, like the child, whoſe folly prov'd
"its loſs,
"Refus'd the gold, and did accept the
"droſs."

This natually leading her into ſome reflections on the merit of mr. Trueworth, ſhe could not help wondering, by what infatuation ſhe had been governed, when rejecting him, or what was tantamount to rejecting him, treating him in ſuch a manner as might make him deſpair of being accepted. —'What though my heart 'was inſenſible of love, ſaid ſhe, my 'reaſon —nay my very pride, might 'have influenced me to embrace a pro- 'poſal, which would have rendered me 'the envy of my own ſex, and excited

'the eſteem and veneration of the other.' — Thinking ſtill more deeply, — 'O 'God,' cried ſhe, with vehemence, to 'what a height of happineſs might I 'have been raiſed! And into what an 'abyſs of wretchedneſs am I now plunged! '— Irretrievably undone, married without loving or being loved, loſt in my 'bloom of years to every joy that can 'make life a bleſſing.'

Nothing ſo much ſharpens the edge of affliction as a conſciouſneſs of having brought it upon ourſelves; to remember that all we could wiſh for, — all that could make us truly happy, was once in our power to be poſſeſſed of, and wantonly ſhunning the good that heaven and fortune offered, we headlong run into the ills we mourn, renders them doubly grievous.

This being the caſe with our heroine, how ought all the fair and young to guard againſt a vanity ſo fatal to a lady, who but for that one foible, had been the happieſt, as ſhe was in all other reſpects, the moſt deſerving of her ſex! — But to return.

A juſt ſenſibility of the errors of her paſt conduct, joined with ſome other emotions,

emotions, which the reader may eaſily gueſs at, though ſhe as yet knew not the meaning of herſelf, gave her but little repoſe that night; and pretty early the next morning ſhe received no inconſiderable addition to her perplexities.

The time, in which mr. Munden had promiſed to give his anſwer to the lawyer, was now near expired, yet was he as irreſolute as ever: — loth he was to have the affair between him and his wife made public, and equally loth to comply with her demands; — before he did either, it therefore came into his head to try what effect menaces would produce, and accordingly wrote to her in theſe terms.

To mrs. Munden.

'Madam,

'THOUGH your late behaviour has 'proved the little affection you have 'for me, I ſtill retain too much for you 'to be able to part with you. — No, be 'aſſured, I never will forego the right 'that marriage gives me over you, — 'will never yield to live a widower while 'I am a huſband, and if you return not 'within four and twenty hours, ſhall 'take ſuch meaſures as the law directs 'to force you back to my embraces; —

'by

'by this time to morrow you may expect 'to have ſuch company at your levee, 'as you will not be well pleaſed with, 'and from whoſe authority not all your 'friends can ſcreen you: — but as I am 'unwilling to expoſe you, I once more 'court you to ſpare yourſelf this diſgrace, 'and me the pain of inflicting it; — I 'give you this day to conſider on what 'you have to do, — the future peace of 'us both depends on your reſult, for your 'own reaſon ought to inform you, that 'being brought to me by compulſion, 'will deſerve other ſort of treatment than 'ſuch as you might hope to find on re-'turning of your own accord to

'Your much afronted huſband,

'G. MUNDEN.'

This letter very much alarmed both the ſiſter and the brother, — the former trembled at the thoughts of ſeeing herſelf in the hands of the officers of juſtice, and the latter could not but be uneaſy that a diſturbance of this kind ſhould happen in his houſe: — they were juſt going to ſend for mr. Markland to conſult him on what was to be done, when that gentleman, whom chance had brought that way, luckily came in: — he found

found mr. Thoughtleſs in great diſcompoſure, and mrs. Munden almoſt drown'd in tears. On being informed of the occaſion, — 'I ſee no reaſon,' ſaid he gravely, 'for all this; — I cannot think 'that mr. Munden will put in execution 'what he threatens, at leaſt not till after 'I have ſpoke to him again; — I rather 'think he writes in this manner only to 'terrify you, madam, into a ſubmiſſion 'to his will; however,' continued he, 'after a pretty long pauſe, 'to be ſecure 'from all danger of an affront this way, 'I think it would be highly proper you 'ſhould retire to ſome place, where he 'may not know where to find you, till I 'have once more tried how far he may 'be prevailed upon to do you juſtice.'

This advice being highly approved of, 'my wife's ſiſter,' reſumed he, 'has a 'very pleaſant and commodious houſe 'on the bank of the river on the Surry 'ſide; — ſhe takes lodgers ſometimes, 'but at preſent is without, ſo that if you 'reſolve to be concealed, you cannot 'find a more convenient retreat, eſpecially as its being ſo near London, no-'thing of moment can happen here, but 'what you may be apprized of in little 'more than an hour.'

Mrs.

Mrs. Munden teſtifying as much ſatisfaction at this propoſal as a perſon in her circumſtances could be capable of feeling, mr. Markland told her, that he was ready to conduct her immediately to the place he mentioned, and her brother adding that he would accompany them, and ſee his ſiſter ſafe to her new abode, they all ſet out together on their little voyage, mrs. Munden having firſt given directions to her ſervants where they ſhould follow her with ſuch things, as ſhe thought would be wanted during her ſtay there.

On their arrival they found mr. Markland had ſpoken very modeſtly of the place he recommended: the houſe was pleaſant almoſt beyond deſcription, and rendered much more ſo by the obliging behaviour of its owner.

They all dined together that day, and, on parting, it was agreed, that mrs. Munden ſhould ſend her man every morning to town, in order to bring her intelligence of whatever accidents had happened, in relation to her affair, on the preceding day.

As much as this lady had been rejoiced at the kind reception ſhe had met with from

from her brother under her misfortunes, ſhe was now equally pleaſed at being removed for a time from him, not only becauſe ſhe thought herſelf ſecure from any inſults might be offered by her huſband, but alſo becauſe this private receſs ſeemed a certain defence againſt the ſight of mr. Trueworth; — a thing ſhe knew not well how to have avoided in town, without breaking off her acquaintance with lady Loveit.

After the gentlemen were gone, the ſiſter in law of mr. Markland led her fair gueſt into the garden, which before ſhe had only a curſory view of; — ſhe ſhewed her among many other things, ſeveral curious exotic plants, which ſhe told her ſhe had procured from the nurſeries of ſome perſons of condition, to whom ſhe had the honour to be known; but mrs. Munden being no great connoiſſeur that way, did not take much notice of what ſhe ſaid concerning them, till coming to the lower end, ſhe perceived a little wicket gate, — 'To where does 'this lead?' cried ſhe: 'I will ſhew you 'preſently, madam,' replied the other, and plucking it open, they both entered into a graſs walk, hemmed in on each ſide with trees, which ſeemed as old as the creation; — they had not gone many paces

paces, before an arbour, erected between two of theſe venerable monuments of antiquity, and overſpread with jeſſamines and honey-ſuckles, attracted mrs. Munden's eyes. — 'Oh how delightful is this! ſaid ſhe: — 'It would have been much 'more ſo, madam, if it had been placed 'on the other ſide of the walk,' ſaid the gentlewoman, 'and if I live till next 'ſpring, will have the poſition of it 'altered; — you will preſently ſee my 'reaſons for it,' continued ſhe, 'if you 'pleaſe to turn your eyes a little to the 'right.' — Mrs. Munden doing as ſhe was deſired, had the proſpect of a very beautiful garden, decorated with plots of flowers, ſtatues, and trees cut in a moſt elegant manner. — 'Does all this belong 'to you,' demanded ſhe, ſomewhat ſurprized? — No, madam, anſwered the other, 'but they are part of the ſame 'eſtate, and at preſent rented by a gen-'tleman of condition, who lives at the 'next door: — the walk we are in is alſo 'common to us both, each having a 'gate to enter it at pleaſure, though in-'deed they little frequent it, having 'much finer of their own.' — With ſuch like chat they beguiled the time till the evening dew reminded them it was beſt to quit the open air.

Mrs.

Mrs. Munden paſſed this night in more tranquillity than ſhe had done many preceding ones; — ſhe awoke however much ſooner than was her cuſtom, and finding herſelf leſs diſpoſed to return to the embraces of ſleep than to partake that felicity ſhe heard a thouſand chearful birds tuning their little throats in praiſe of, ſhe roſe, and went down into the garden: — the contemplative humour ſhe was in, led her to the arbour ſhe had been ſo much charmed with the night before; — ſhe threw herſelf upon the moſſy ſeat, where ſcenting the fragrancy of the ſweets around her, made more delicious by the freſhneſs of the morning's gale — 'how delightful — how heavenly, ſaid ſhe to herſelf, 'is this ſolitude, how 'truly preferable to all the noiſy giddy 'pleaſures of the tumultuous town, yet 'how have I deſpiſed, and ridiculed the 'ſoft ſerenity of a country life;' — then recollecting ſome diſcourſe ſhe formerly had with mr. Trueworth on that ſubject, 'I wonder,' cried ſhe, what mr. True-'worth would ſay if he knew the change 'that a little time has wrought in me! 'he would certainly find me now more 'deſerving of his friendſhip than ever 'he could think me of his love; — but 'he is ignorant — inſenſible of my real 'ſentiments,

'ſentiments, and if ſir Baſil, and lady 'Loveit, ſhould tell him with what ab-'ruptneſs I fled their houſe at the news 'of his approach, I muſt appear in his 'eyes the moſt vain, ſtupid, thankleſs 'creature I once was; but ſuch is my 'unhappy ſituation, that I dare not even 'wiſh he ſhould diſcover what paſſes in 'my heart; the juſt ſenſibility of his 'amiable qualities, and of the ſervices 'he has done me, which would once 'have been meritorious in me to have 'avowed, would now be highly criminal.'

With theſe reflections ſhe took mr. Trueworth's picture, which ſhe always carried about her, and looking on it with the greateſt tenderneſs, 'Though I no 'more muſt ſee himſelf,' ſaid ſhe, 'I may 'at leaſt be allowed to pay the tribute of 'my gratitude to this dumb repreſen-'tative of the man to whom I have been 'ſo much obliged.'—At this inſtant, a thouſand proofs of love given her by the original of the copy in her hand occuring all at once to her remembrance, tears filled her eyes, and her breaſt ſwelled with involuntary ſighs.

In this painfully pleaſing amuſement did ſhe continue for ſome time, and had doubtleſs done ſo much longer, if a ſud-

den

den ruſtling among the leaves behind her, had not made her turn her head to ſee what had occaſioned it; — but where are the words that can expreſs the ſurprize, the wild confuſion ſhe was in, when the firſt glance of her eyes preſented her with the ſight of the real object, whoſe image ſhe had been thus tenderly contemplating: — ſhe ſhrieked, the picture dropped from her hand, the uſe of all her faculties forſook her, ſhe ſunk from the ſeat where ſhe was ſitting, and had certainly fainted quite away, but for the immediate aſſiſtance of the perſon, who had cauſed theſe extraordinary emotions.

Her fancy indeed, ſtrong as it was, had formed no viſionary appearance: it was the very identical mr. Trueworth, whom chance had brought to make the diſcovery of a ſecret, which of all things in the world he had the leaſt ſuſpicion of.

He was intimately acquainted with the perſon, to whom the houſe adjoining to that where mrs. Munden lodged belong'd, and hearing where he was, on his return from Oxfordſhire, had come the evening before, intending to paſs a day or two with him in this agreeable receſs.

As

As he was never a friend to much ſleeping, he roſe that morning, and went down into the garden before the greateſt part of the family had quitted their beds; he ſaw mrs. Munden while at too great a diſtance to know who ſhe was, yet did her air and motion as ſhe walked, ſtrike him with ſomething, which made him willing to ſee what ſort of face belonged to ſo genteel a form; — drawing more near, his curioſity was gratified with a ſight he little expected: — he was juſt about to accoſt her with the ſalutations of the morning, when ſhe went into the arbour, and ſeated herſelf in the manner already deſcribed: — the extreme penſiveneſs of her mind had hindered her from perceiving, that any one was near; but the little covert under which ſhe was placed being open on both ſides, he had a full view of every thing ſhe did: — though ſhe was in the moſt negligent night-dreſs that could be, ſhe ſeemed as lovely to him as ever; all his firſt flames rekindled in his heart, while gazing on her with this uninterrupted freedom, — he longed to ſpeak to her, but durſt not, leſt by doing ſo he ſhould be deprived of the pleaſure he now enjoyed, till obſerving ſhe had ſomething in her hand, which ſhe ſeemed to look upon with great

great attention, and ſometimes betrayed agitations he had never ſeen in her before, he was impatient to diſcover if poſſible the motive, — he therefore advanced as gently as he could towards the back of the arbour, which having no woodwork, and the leafy canopy only ſupported by ozier boughs, placed at a good diſtance from each other, he had a full opportunity of beholding all that the reader has been told: — but what was his amazement to find it was his own picture! that very picture, which had been taken from the painter's, was the object of her meditations! — he heard her ſighs, he ſaw her lovely hand frequently put up to wipe away the tears that fell from her eyes while looking on it; — he alſo ſaw her more than once, though doubtleſs in thoſe moments not knowing what ſhe did, preſs the lifeleſs image to her boſom with the utmoſt tenderneſs; — ſcarce could he give credit to the teſtimony of his ſenſes, near as he was to her, he even ſtrained his ſight to be more ſure, and forgetting all the precautions he had taken, thruſt himſelf as far as he was able between the branches of which the arbour was compoſed.

On perceiving the effect this laſt action had produced, the gate, though not

not above twenty paces off, ſeemed too ſlow a paſſage to fly to her relief, and ſetting his foot upon a pedeſtal of a ſtatue, quick as thought, or the flaſh of elemental fire, ſprang over the myrtle hedge that parted the garden from the walk, — 'Ah, ma-'dam,' cried he, 'catching her in his arms to hinder her from falling, — 'what 'has the unhappy Trueworth done to 'render his preſence ſo alarming! — 'How have I deſerved to appear thus 'dreadful in your eyes!'

That admirable preſence of mind, which mrs. Munden had ſhewn on many occaſions, did not in this entirely leave her; — the time he was ſpeaking thoſe few words ſufficed to enable her to recollect her ſcattered ſpirits, and withdrawing herſelf from the hold he had taken of her, and removing a little farther on the bench as if to give him room to ſit, — 'Sir, ſaid ſhe, with a voice pretty well compoſed, — the obligations I have to you 'demand other ſort of ſentiments than 'thoſe you ſeem to accuſe me of; — but 'I thought myſelf alone, and was not 'guarded againſt the ſurprize of meet-'ing you in this place. — I ought in-'deed, replied he, to have been more 'cautious in my approach, eſpecially 'as I found you deep in contemplation,

'which

'which perhaps I have been my own 'enemy by interrupting.

Till he ſpoke in this manner, ſhe was not quite aſſured how far he had been witneſs of her behaviour, but what he now ſaid confirming her of what ſhe had but feared before, threw her into a ſecond confuſion little inferior to the former; — he ſaw it, — but ſaw it without that pity he would have felt had it proceeded from any other motive, and eager to bring her to a more full eclairciſſment, — 'If you 'really think, madam,' ſaid he, 'that 'you have any obligations to me, you 'may requite them all by anſwering ſin-'cerely to one queſtion: — Tell me I be-'ſeech you,' continued he, taking up the picture, which ſhe had neither thought nor opportunity to remove from the place where it had fallen, 'reſolve me 'how this little picture came into your 'poſſeſſion?' What was now the condition of mrs. Munden! — She could neither find any pretence to evade the truth, nor fit words to confeſs it, till mr. Trueworth repeating his requeſt, and vowing he would never leave her till ſhe granted it, — 'What need have I to 'anſwer?' ſaid ſhe, bluſhing, — 'you 'know in what manner it was taken 'from the painter's, and the ſight of it

'in my hand is ſufficient to inform you 'of the whole.'

'Charming declaration — tranſporting '— raviſhing to thought,' cried he, kiſ- 'ſing her hand, — 'Oh had I known it 'ſooner, engaged as I then was to one, 'who well deſerved my love, could I 'have gueſſed miſs Betſy Thoughtleſs 'was the contriver of that tender fraud, 'I know not what revolution might have 'happened in my heart! the empire 'you had there, was never totally extir- 'pated, and kindneſs might have re- 'gained what cruelty had loſt:' — 'Do 'not deceive yourſelf, ſir, ſaid ſhe, in- terrupting him with all the courage ſhe could aſſume, 'nor miſtake that for 'love, which was only the effects of mere 'gratitude:' Theſe words were accom- panied with a look, which once would have ſtruck him with the moſt ſubmiſſive awe, but he was now too well acquainted with the ſentiments ſhe had for him to be deterred by any other outward ſhew of coldneſs; — 'Call it by what name you 'pleaſe,' cried he, 'ſo you permit me 'the continuance of it, and vouchſafe 'me the ſame favours you beſtow on my 'inſenſible reſemblance.' — In ſpeaking this, he threw his arms about her waiſt, not regarding the efforts ſhe made to hin- der him, and claſp'd her to his breaſt with

with a vehemence, which in all his days of courtſhip to her he never durſt attempt: — 'Forbear, ſir,' ſaid ſhe, 'you 'know I am not at liberty to be entertained with diſcourſes, nor with actions 'of this nature; — looſe me this moment, or be aſſured all the kind 'thoughts I had of you, and on which 'you have too much preſumed, will be 'converted into the extremeſt hate and 'deteſtation.' — The voice, in which ſhe uttered this menace, convincing him how much ſhe was in earneſt; he let go his hold, removed ſome paces from her, and beheld her for ſome moments with a ſilent admiration: — 'I have obeyed you, 'madam,' cried he, with a deep ſigh, — 'you are all angel, — be all angel ſtill, 'far be it from me to tempt you from 'the glorious height you ſtand in; yet 'how unhappy has this interview made 'made me! — I love you without daring even to wiſh for a return; nay ſo 'fully has your virtue conquered, that I 'muſt love you more for the repulſe you 'have given my too audacious hopes; — 'you may at leaſt pity the fate to which 'I am condemned.'

'It would be in vain for me,' replied ſhe, in a voice ſomewhat broken by the inward conflict ſhe ſuſtained, 'to endeavour to conceal what my inadver-

'tencies have ſo fully betrayed to you, and 'you may aſſure yourſelf, that I ſhall 'think on you with all the tenderneſs 'that honour and the duties of my ſtation 'will admit: — but remember, ſir, I am 'a wife, and being ſuch, ought never to 'ſee you more; — in regard therefore to 'my reputation and peace of mind, I 'muſt intreat you will henceforth avoid 'my preſence, with the ſame care I will 'do yours.'

'Severe as this injunction is,' replied he, 'my ſoul avows the juſtice of it, and 'I ſubmit.' — 'Farewell then', ſaid ſhe, riſing from her ſeat, 'oh farewell cried he, and kiſſed her hand with emotions not to be expreſſed, 'farewell for ever,' rejoined ſhe, turning haſtily away to prevent his ſeeing the tears, with which her eyes were over-charged, and in that cruel inſtant overflowed her cheeks: — ſhe advanced with all the ſpeed ſhe could towards the wicket-gate, but when there, could not forbear giving one look behind, and perceiving he had left the walk, and was proceeding through the garden with folded arms, and a dejected pace, 'Poor 'Trueworth! cried ſhe, and purſued him with her eyes till he was quite out of ſight.

Some readers may perhaps blame mr. Trueworth,

Trueworth, as having preſumed too far on the diſcovery of the lady's paſſion, and others of a contrary way of thinking, laugh at him for being ſo eaſily repulſed, but all in general muſt applaud the conduct of mrs. Munden; till this dangerous inſtance ſhe had never had an opportunity of ſhewing the command ſhe had over herſelf, and as mr. Eſtcount juſtly ſays,

'Ne'er let the fair-one boaſt of vir-
'tue prov'd,
'Till ſhe has well refus'd the man ſhe
'truly lov'd.'

CHAP. XXII.

Is leſs pleaſing than the former.

AFTER this ſolemn parting between mr. Trueworth and mrs. Munden, that lady's mind was in too much diſorder to think what was become of the little picture that had occaſioned it, till an hour or two after, the maid of the houſe came running into the chamber with it in her hand, 'Does this pretty 'picture belong to you, madam,' ſaid ſhe:—mrs. Munden ſtarted, but ſoon re-

recovering herſelf, anſwered it did, ſaid that it was the picture of her younger brother, and that ſhe believed ſhe might pull it out of her pocket with her handkerchief, or ſome how or other drop it in the walk. — Ay, to be ſure it was ſo,' ſaid the maid, 'for it was there I found 'it; — as I was going to the pump for 'ſome water, I ſaw ſomething that glit-'tered juſt by the little arbour, on which 'I run, and took it up, but my miſtreſs 'told me ſhe believed it was yours, for 'ſhe knew your ladyſhip was in the walk 'this morning.' — 'I am glad thou haſt 'found it,' replied mrs. Munden, for it 'would have vexed me to the heart to 'have loſt it. — 'Ay, to be ſure, ma-'dam,' cried ſhe, 'for it is a ſweet pic-'ture, your brother is a handſome gen-'tleman, I warrant there are a thouſand 'ladies in love with him.' — Mrs. munden could not forbear ſmiling at the ſimplicity of the wench, but willing to be rid of her rewarded her honeſty with a crown piece, and diſmiſs'd her.

She was rejoiced indeed to have this picture once more in her poſſeſſion, not only becauſe ſome other might have found, and kept it, but alſo becauſe ſhe thought ſhe might indulge herſelf in looking on it, without any breach of that duty, to which ſhe was reſolved ſo ſtrictly

to

to adhere: — To be ſecure however from a ſecond rencounter with the original in that place, ſhe kept cloſe in the houſe, and ſtirred not out of it all the time ſhe was there; — but her apprehenſions on this ſcore were needleſs: — Mr. Trueworth religiouſly obſerved the promiſe he had made her, and leſt he ſhould be under any temptation to break it while ſo near her, took leave of his friend that ſame day, and returned to London, but carried with him ſentiments very different from thoſe he had brought down, as will hereafter appear.

As to mrs. Munden, ſhe found that ſhe had no leſs occaſion for exerting the heroine when alone, than when encircled in the arms of mr. Trueworth: — the accident, which had betrayed the ſecret of her heart to him, had alſo diſcovered it to herſelf. — She was now convinced, that it was ſomething more than eſteem, — than friendſhip, — than gratitude, his merits had inſpired her with; — ſhe was conſcious, that while ſhe moſt reſiſted the glowing preſſure of his lips, ſhe had felt a guilty pleaſure in the touch, which had been near depriving her of doing ſo, and that though ſhe had reſolved never to ſee him more, it would be very difficult to refrain wiſhing to be for ever with him.

This ſhe thought ſo highly criminal in herſelf, that ſhe ought not to indulge the remembrance of ſo dear, ſo dangerous an invader of her duty; yet when ſhe conſidered, that merely for her ſake, and not through the weak reſiſtance ſhe had made, his own honour had nobly triumphed over wild deſire in a heart ſo young, and amorous as his, it increaſed that love and admiration which ſhe in vain endeavoured to ſubdue, and ſhe could not help crying out with Caliſta, in the play,

'Oh had I ſooner known thy wonderous virtue,
'Thy love, thy truth, thou excellent young man,
'We might have both been happy.

But to baniſh as much as poſſible all thoſe ideas, which her nicety of honour made her tremble at, it was her fixed determination to retire into L———, as ſoon as ſhe had ended her affairs with her huſband, and paſs the remainder of her days, where ſhe ſhould never hear the too dear name of Trueworth.

She did not therefore neglect ſending her ſervant to town, but he returned that day, and ſeveral ſucceeding ones without the leaſt intelligence; — no letter nor meſſage

meſſage from mr. Munden having been left for her at her brother's, on which ſhe began to imagine, that he never had in reality intended to put his threats in execution.

Mr. Markland, in the mean time, had been twice to wait on him, but the ſervants had told him, that their maſter was extremely indiſpoſed, and could not be ſeen:— this he looked upon as a feint to put off giving him an anſwer as he had promiſed, and both mr. Thoughtleſs and his ſiſter were of the ſame opinion when they heard it.— Mr. Markland went again and again, however, but was ſtill denied acceſs;— near a whole week paſſing over in this manner, mrs. Munden grew very uneaſy, fearing ſhe ſhould be able to obtain as little juſtice, as favour from her huſband.

But guilty as he had been in other repects, he was intirely innocent in this;— the force of the agitation he had of late ſuſtained, joined to repeated debauches, had over-heated his blood, and thrown him into a very violent fever, in ſo much that in a few days his life was diſpaired of:— the whiſpers of all about him,—the looks of the phyſician that attended him, and above all what he felt within himſelf, convincing him of the

danger he was in, all his vices, — his exceſſes now appeared to him ſuch as they truly were, and filled him with a remorſe, which he had been but too much addicted to ridicule in others; — in fine, the horrors of approaching diſſolution rendered him one of thoſe many examples, which daily verify theſe words of mr. Dryden;

'Sure there are none but fear a future
'ſtate!
'And when the moſt obdurate ſwear
'they do not,
'Their trembling hearts bely their
'boaſting tongues.'

Among the number of thoſe faults, which preſented him with the moſt direfull images, that of the ill treatment he had given a wife, who ſo little deſerved it, lay not the leaſt heavy upon his conſcience; — he ſent his ſervant to mr. Thoughtleſs, at whoſe houſe he imagined ſhe ſtill was, to intreat he would prevail on her to ſee him before he died: — but that gentleman giving a very ſlight anſwer, as believeing it all artifice, he engaged the apothecary that adminſtered to him, and was known to mr. Thoughtleſs, to go on the ſame errand; on which the brother of mrs. Munden ſaid, ſhe was not with him at preſent, but he would ſend to let her know what had happened; accordingly

accordingly he diſpatched one of his men immediatly to her with the following billet.

To mrs. MUNDEN.

Dear ſiſter,

'MR. Cardiack the apothecary aſſures me, that your huſband is in fact ill, and in extreme danger; — he is very preſſing to ſee you: — I will not pretend to adviſe you what to do on this occaſion, — you are the beſt judge; I ſhall only ſay, that if you think fit to comply with his requeſt, you muſt be ſpeedy, for it ſeems it is the opinion of the gentlemen of the faculty, that he is very near his end. I am, dear ſiſter,

'Yours affectionately,

'T. THOUGHTLESS.

Not all the indifference ſhe had for the perſon of mr. Munden, — not all the reſentment his moroſeneſs and ill-nature had excited in her, could hinder her from feeling an extreme ſhock on hearing his life was in danger; — ſhe ſought for no excuſes, either to evade, or delay what he deſired of her; ſhe went directly to him, equally inclined to do ſo by her compaſſion, as ſhe thought herſelf obliged to do by her duty,

As ſhe entered the chamber ſhe met

the apothecary coming out; — in aſking him ſome queſtions, though ſhe ſpoke very low, mr. Munden thought he diſtinguiſhed her voice, and cried out as loud as he was able, 'Is my wife here?' On which approaching the bed, and gently opening one of the curtains, — 'Yes, mr. Munden,' replied ſhe, 'I am 'come to offer you all the aſſiſtance in 'my power, and am ſorry to find you 'are in any need of it.' — 'This is very 'kind,' ſaid he, and ſtretched out one of his hands towards her, which ſhe took between her's with a great deal of tenderneſs, 'I have been much to blame, re-'ſumed he, I have greatly wronged you, 'but forgive me, — if I live, I will en-'deavour to deſerve it.'

'I hope, ſaid ſhe, heaven will reſtore 'your health, and that we may live to-'gether in a manner becoming perſons 'united as we are.' — 'Then you will 'not leave me,' cried he; 'Never,' anſwered ſhe, 'unleſs your behaviour ſhall 'convince me you do not deſire my 'ſtay.'

Here he began to make ſolemn proteſtations of future amendment, but his voice failing him through extreme weakneſs, a deep ſigh, and tender preſſure of his cheek to her's as ſhe leaned her head upon

upon the pillow, gave her to underſtand what more he would have ſaid: — on this ſhe aſſured him ſhe was ready to believe every thing he would have her, intreated him to compoſe himſelf, and endeavour to get a little reſt; — 'in the mean 'time,' ſaid ſhe, 'I will order things ſo 'that I may lie in the ſame room with 'you, and quit your preſence neither 'night nor day.'

Here he preſſed his face cloſe to hers again, in token of the ſatisfation he felt in hearing what ſhe ſaid, and the nurſe who attended him that inſtant, preſenting him with ſome things the phyſician had ordered ſhould be given him about that hour, joined her entreaties with thoſe of mrs. Munden, that he would try to ſleep, to which he made a ſign that he would do ſo; — and the curtains being drawn, they both retired to the farther end of the room.

As he lay pretty quiet for a conſiderable time, mrs. Munden recollected, that there was a thing, which friendſhip and good manners exacted from her; — ſhe had wrote the very day before a letter to lady Loveit, acquainting her with the motive, which had obliged her to quit her brother's houſe, and deſiring ſhe would favour her with a viſit as ſoon as con-

convenience would permit, at the place of her retirement. — As ſhe doubted not but the good nature of this lady would prevail on her to comply with her requeſt, ſhe could not diſpenſe with ſending her an immediate account of the ſudden revolution in her affairs, and the accident which had occaſioned this ſecond removal.

She had no ſooner diſpatched a little billet for this purpoſe, than the groans of mr. Munden teſtifying that he was awake, drew both her and the nurſe again to the bedſide: — they found him in very great agonies, and without the power of ſpeech; the doctor and apothecary were ſent for in a great hurry, but before either of them came, the unhappy gentleman had breathed his laſt.

Mrs. Munden had not affected any thing more in this interview than what ſhe really felt; — her virtue and her compaſſion had all the effect on her that love has in moſt others of her ſex; ſhe had been deeply troubled at finding her huſband in ſo deplorable a ſituation; the tenderneſs he had now expreſſed for her, and his contrition for his paſt faults, made a great impreſſion on her mind, and the ſhock of ſeeing him depart was truly dreadful to her; — the grief ſhe appeared

peared in was undiſſembled — the tears ſhe ſhed unforced ; — ſhe withdrew into another room, where ſhutting herſelf up for ſome hours, life, death, and futurity were the ſubjects of her meditations.

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains a very brief account of every material occurrence that happened in regard of our fair widow, during the ſpace of a whole year, with ſome other particulars of leſs moment.

MR. Thoughtleſs was not at home when the news of mr. Munden's death arrived, but as ſoon as he was informed of it, he went to his ſiſter, and on finding her much more deeply affected at this accident than he could have imagined, preſſed her in the moſt tender terms to quit that ſcene of mortality, and return to his houſe : — the perſuaſions of a brother, who of late had behaved with ſo much kindneſs towards her, prevailed on her to accept of the invitation, and having given ſome neceſſary orders in regard to the family, was carried away that ſame night

night in a chair with the curtains close drawn.

She saw no company however, till after the funeral, and when that was over, lady Loveit was the first admitted. — As mrs. Munden was still under a great dejection of spirits, which was visible in her countenance, — 'If I did not know you to be 'the sincerest creature in the world, said lady Loveit, 'I should take you to 'be the greatest dissembler in it, — for 'it would be very difficult for any one 'less acquainted with you to believe you 'could be really afflicted at the death of 'a person, whose life rendered you so 'unhappy.'

'Mistake me not, dear lady Loveit,' answered she, 'I do not pretend to la-'ment the death of mr. Munden, as it 'deprives me of his society, or as that of 'a person with whom I could ever have 'enjoyed any great share of felicity, even 'though his life had made good the pro-'fessions of his last moments; — but I 'lament him as one who was my hus-'band, whom duty forbad me to hate 'while living, and whom decency re-'quires me to mourn when dead.'

'So then,' cried lady Loveit, 'I find 'you take as much pains to grieve for a 'bad

'bad huſband, as thoſe who have the 'misfortune to loſe a good one do, to 'alleviate their ſorrows;—' but my 'dear,' continued ſhe with a more ſerious air, —'I ſee no occaſion for all 'this:—I am well aſſured, that your 'virtue and the ſweetneſs of your temper enabled you to diſcharge all the 'duties of a wife to mr. Munden while 'alive, and with that I think you 'ought to be content:—he is now 'dead, the covenant between you is diſſolved, heaven has releaſed you, and I 'hope forgiven him,—decency obliges 'you to wear black, forbids you to appear abroad for a whole month, and at 'any public place of diverſion for a 'much longer time; but it does not reſtrain you from being eaſy in yourſelf, 'and chearful with your friends.

'Your ladyſhip ſpeaks right, ſaid mrs. Munden, 'but yet there is a ſhock in 'death, which one cannot preſently get 'over.—I grant there is,' replied lady Loveit, 'and if we thought too deeply 'on it, we ſhould feel all the agonies of 'that dreadful hour before our time, and 'become a burden to ourſelves and to 'the world.'

It is certain, indeed, that the ſurprize and pity for mr. Munden's ſudden and unex-

unexpected fate, had at the firſt overwhelmed her ſoul, yet when thoſe emotions were a little evaporated, ſhe rather indulged affliction, becauſe ſhe thought it her duty to do ſo, than endeavoured any way to combat with it.

It was not therefore very difficult to reaſon her out of a melancholly, which ſhe had in a manner forced upon herſelf, and was far from being natural to her, and when once convinced, that ſhe ought to be eaſy under this ſtroke of providence, became entirely ſo.

The painful taſk ſhe had impoſed upon her mind being over, more agreeable ideas ſucceeded: — the remembrance of mr. Trueworth, — his recovered love, — the knowledge he had of hers, and the conſideration that now both of them were in a condition to avow their mutual tenderneſs without a crime, could not but transfuſe a ſenſation more pleaſing than ſhe had ever before been capable of experiencing.

In the mean time, that gentleman paſſed through a variety of emotions on her account, nor will it ſeem ſtrange he ſhould do ſo to any one, who caſts the leaſt retroſpect on his former behaviour; — he had loved her from the firſt moment

moment he beheld her, and had continued to love her for a long ſeries of time with ſuch an exceſs of of paſſion, that not all his reaſon on her ill treatment of him, and her ſuppoſed unworthineſs, was ſcarce ſufficient to enable him wholly to deſiſt: — a new amour was requiſite to divide his wiſhes; — the fondneſs and artful blandiſhments of miſs Flora, ſerved to wean his heart from the once darling object, but there demanded no leſs than the amiable perſon, and more amiable temper of miſs Harriot to drive thence an idea ſo accuſtomed to preſide: — all this however, as it appeared, did not wholly extinguiſh the firſt flame; — the innocence of the charming miſs Betſy fully cleared, all the errors of her conduct reformed, rekindled in him an eſteem; — the ſight of her after ſo many months abſence, made the ſeemingly dead embers of deſire begin to glow, and on the diſcovery of her ſentiments in his favour, burſt forth into a blaze: — he was not maſter of himſelf in the firſt ruſh of ſo joyous a ſurprize; he forgot that ſhe was married, — he approached her in the manner the reader has been already told, and for which he afterwards ſeverely condemn'd himſelf, as thinking he ought to be content with knowing ſhe loved him, without putting her modeſty to the

bluſh

bluſh by letting her perceive the diſcovery he had made.

As lady Loveit, without ſuſpecting the effect which her diſcourſe produced, had been often talking of the ill treatment ſhe received from mr. Munden, and the neceſſity ſhe had been under of quitting his houſe, — the ſincere veneration he now had for her, made him ſimpathize in all the diſquiets he was ſenſible ſhe ſuſtained: — but when he heard this cruel huſband was no more, and at the ſame time was informed in what manner ſhe behaved, both in his laſt moments, and after his deceaſe, nothing, not even his love, could equal his admiration of her virtue and her prudence.

What would he not now have given to have ſeen her! but he knew ſuch a thing was utterly impracticable, and to attempt it might loſe him all the tenderneſs ſhe had for him; — his impatience however would not ſuffer him to ſeem altogether paſſive, and unconcerned at an event of ſo much moment to the happineſs of them both, and he reſolved to write, but to find terms to expreſs himſelf ſo as not to offend either her delicacy, by ſeeming too preſuming, or her tenderneſs, by a pretended indifference,

coſt

coſt him ſome pains: but at length he dictated the following little billet.

To Mrs. MUNDEN.

'Madam,

'I Send you no compliment of condolance, but beg you to be aſſured, 'that my heart is too deeply intereſted 'in every thing that regards you, to be 'capable of feeling the leaſt ſatisfaction 'while yours remains under any inquietude;—all I wiſh at preſent is, that 'you would believe this truth, which if 'you do, I know you have too much 'juſtice and too much generoſity to laviſh all your commiſeration on the inſenſible dead, but will reſerve ſome 'part for the living, who ſtand moſt in 'need of it:—I dare add no more as 'yet, than that I am with an eſteem 'perfect and inviolable,

'Madam,

'Your moſt obedient,

'Moſt devoted,

'And moſt faithful ſervant,

'C. TRUEWORTH.'

Theſe few lines perhaps, ſerved more to

to raiſe the ſpirits of mrs. Munden than all ſhe could receive from any other quarter; — ſhe nevertheleſs perſevered in maintaining the decorum of her condition, and as ſhe had reſolved to retire into L———e in caſe of a ſeparation from her huſband, ſhe thought it moſt proper to fix her reſidence in that place in her ſtate of widowhood, at leaſt for the firſt year of it.

Accordingly ſhe wrote to lady Truſty to acquaint her with her intentions, and received an anſwer ſuch as ſhe expected, full of praiſes of her conduct in this point, and the moſt preſſing invitations to come down with all the ſpeed ſhe could.

What little buſineſs ſhe had in London was ſoon diſpatched, and all was ready for her quitting it within a month after the death of mr. Munden: — places for herſelf and maid were taken in the ſtage coach, — all her things were packed up, and ſent to the inn; — ſhe thought nothing now remained but to take leave of lady Loveit, whom ſhe expected that ſame evening, being the laſt ſhe was to ſtay in town; but near as her departure was, fortune in the mean time had contrived an accident, which put all her fortitude, and preſence of mind to as great

great a trial, as ſhe had ever yet ſuſtained.

Lady Loveit having got a cold, had complained of ſome little diſorder the day before, and though nothing could be more ſlight than her indiſpoſition, yet as ſhe was pretty far advanced in her pregnancy, the care of her phyſician, and the tenderneſs of ſir Baſil, would not permit her by any means to expoſe herſelf to the open air.

Mrs. Munden being informed by a meſſenger from her of what had happened, found herſelf under an abſolute neceſſity of waiting on her, as it would have been ridiculous and prepoſterous, as well as unkind, to have quitted the town for ſo long a time without taking leave of a friend ſuch as lady Loveit.

She could not think of going there without reflecting at the ſame time how ſtrong a probability there was of meeting mr. Trueworth; — ſhe knew indeed that he did not live at ſir Baſil's, having heard he had lately taken a houſe for himſelf, but ſhe knew alſo, that his cloſe connection with that family made him ſeldom let ſlip a day without ſeeing them; — ſhe therefore prepared herſelf as well

as

as ſhe was able for ſuch an interview, in caſe it ſhould ſo happen.

That gentleman had dined there, and on finding lady Loveit was forbid going abroad, and ſir Baſil unwilling to leave her alone, had conſented to ſtay with them the whole day: — they were at ombre when mrs. Munden came, but on her entrance threw aſide the cards; — lady Loveit received her according to the familiarity between them, and ſir Baſil with little leſs freedom, but mr. Trueworth ſaluted her with a more diſtant air; — 'I had not the honour, 'madam,' ſaid he, 'to make you any 'compliments on either of the great 'changes you have undergone, but you 'have always had my beſt wiſhes for 'your proſperity.'

Mrs. Munden, who had pretty well armed herſelf for this encounter, replied with a voice and countenance tolerably well compoſed, — 'Great changes in-'deed, ſir, have happenned to us both 'in a ſhort ſpace of time.' — 'There has 'ſo, madam,' reſumed he, but may the 'next you meet with bring with it laſt-'ing happineſs!' — She eaſily comprehended the meaning of theſe words, but made no anſwer, being at a loſs what to ſay, which might neither too much embolden

embolden, nor wholly diſcourage the motive, which dictated them.

After this, the converſation turned on various ſubjects, but chiefly on that of mrs. Munden's going out of town: — mr. Trueworth ſaid little; — lady Loveit, though ſhe expreſſed an infinite deal of ſorrow for the loſs of ſo amiable a companion, could not forbear applauding her reſolution in this point, but ſir Baſil would fain have been a little pleaſant on the occaſion, if the grave looks of mrs. Munden had not put his raillery to ſilence. — Perceiving the day was near ſhut in, ſhe roſe to take her leave; it was in vain that they uſed all imaginable arguments to perſuade her to ſtay ſupper; ſhe told them, that as the coach went out ſo early, it was neceſſary for her to take ſome repoſe, before ſhe entered upon the fatigue of her journey; — lady Loveit on this allowed the juſtice of her plea, and ſaid no more.

The parting of theſe ladies was very moving, they embraced again and again, promiſed to write frequently to each other, and mingled tears as they exchanged farewels. — Sir Baſil, who had really a very high eſteem for her, was greatly affected, in ſpite of the gayety of his temper, on bidding her adieu, and

happy was it for mrs. Munden, that the concern they both were in hindered them from perceiving that confuſion, that diſtraction of mind, which neither ſhe, nor mr. Trueworth were able to reſtrain totally the marks of, as he approached to make her thoſe compliments, which might have been expected on ſuch an occaſion, even from a perſon the moſt indifferent: his tongue, indeed, uttered no more than words of courſe, but his lips trembled while ſaluting her; nor could ſhe in that inſtant withhold a ſigh, which ſeemed to rend her very heart: — their mutual agitations were in fine too great not to be viſible to each other, and left neither of them any room to doubt of the extreme force of the paſſion from which they ſprang.

The motive, which had made her refuſe ſtaying ſupper at ſir Baſil's, was to prevent mr. Trueworth from having any pretence to wait upon her home, not being able to anſwer how far ſhe could ſupport her character, if expoſed to the tender things he might poſſibly addreſs her with on ſuch an opportunity, and ſhe now found by what ſhe had felt on parting with him, how neceſſary the precaution was that ſhe had taken.

After a night leſs engroſſed by ſleep than

than meditation, ſhe ſet out for L——e, where ſhe arrived without any ill accident to retard her journey, and was received by ſir Ralph and lady Truſty with all thoſe demonſtrations of joy, which ſhe had reaſon to expect from the experienced friendſhip of thoſe worthy perſons.

As this was the place of her nativity, and her father had always lived there in very great eſtimation, the houſe of lady Truſty at firſt was thronged with perſons of almoſt all conditions, who came to pay their compliments to her fair gueſt; and as no circumſtance, no habit could take from her thoſe charms, which nature had beſtowed upon her, her beauty and amiable qualities ſoon became the theme of converſation through the whole county.

She was not inſenſible of the admiration ſhe attracted, but was now far from being elated with it: —all the ſatisfaction ſhe took out of her dear lady Truſty's company was, in reading ſome inſtructive, or entertaining book, and in the letters of thoſe whom ſhe knew to be her ſincere friends; but ſhe had not been much above two months in the country before ſhe received one from a quarter whence ſhe had not expected it. — It

was from mr. Trueworth, and contained as follows.

To mrs. MUNDEN.

'Madam,

'I have the inexpreſſible pleaſure to hear, 'that you are well, by thoſe whom 'you favour with your correſpondence; 'but as they may not think any mention 'of me might be agreeable to you, I take 'the liberty myſelf to acquaint you that 'I live, and flatter myſelf, that infor-'mation is ſufficient to make you know, 'that I only live to be, with the moſt 'firm attachment,

'Madam,

'Your eternally devoted ſervant,

'C. TRUEWORTH.

Theſe few lines aſſuring her of his love, and at the ſame time of his reſpect, by his not preſuming once to mention the paſſion, of which he was poſſeſſed, charmed her to a very high degree, and prepared her heart for another, which in a few weeks after he found a pretence for ſending to her; — it contained theſe lines.

To mrs. MUNDEN,

'Madam,

'I am now more unhappy than ever; '— lady Loveit is gone out of town, 'and I have no opportunity of hearing the

'the only ſounds can bleſs my longing 'ears; — in pity therefore to my im-'patience, vouchſafe to let me know you 'are in health, — ſay that you are well, 'it is all I aſk, — one line will coſt you 'little pains, and be no breach of that 'decorum, to which you ſo ſtrictly ad-'here, yet will be a ſovereign ſpecific 'to reſtore the tranquility of him, who 'is with an unſpeakable regard,

'Madam,

'Your unalterable

'And devoted ſervant,

'C. TRUEWORTH.

Mrs. Munden found this requeſt ſo reaſonable, and withall couched in ſuch reſpectful terms, that ſhe ought not to refuſe compliance with it, and accordingly wrote to him in this manner.

To CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Eſq;

'Sir,

'THE generous concern you expreſs 'for my welfare, demands a no leſs 'grateful return: — as to my health, it 'is no way impaired ſince I left Lon-'don, nor can my mind labour under 'any diſcompoſure, while my friends 'continue to think kindly of me. I am 'with all due reſpect,

'Sir,

'Yours, &c.

Upon this obliging anſwer he ventured to write again, intreating her to allow a correſpondence with him by letters while ſhe remained in L——————e, urging that this was a favour ſhe could not reaſonably deny to any friend, who deſired it with the ſame ſincerity ſhe muſt be convinced he did.

Mrs. Munden pauſed a little, but finding that neither her virtue, nor her reputation could any way ſuffer by granting this requeſt, her heart would not permit her to deny both him and herſelf ſo innocent a ſatisfaction, and by the next poſt gave him the permiſſion he petitioned for in theſe words.

To CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Eſq;

'Sir,

'I Should be unjuſt to myſelf, as well as ungrateful to the friendſhip with which you honour me, ſhould I reject any proofs of it that are conſiſtent with my character to receive, and to return: —write, therefore as often as you think proper, and be aſſured I ſhall give your letters all the welcome you can wiſh, provided they contain nothing unſuitable to the preſent condition of her, who is, as much as you ought to expect, 'Sir,

'Yours, &c.

'B. MUNDEN.'

After

After this an uninterrupted intercourſe of letters continued between them for the whole remainder of the year: — mr. Trueworth was for the moſt part extremely cautious in what manner he expreſſed himſelf, but whenever, as it would ſometimes ſo happen, the warmth of his paſſion made him tranſgreſs the bounds had been preſcribed him, ſhe would not ſeem to underſtand, becauſe ſhe had no mind to be offended.

Thus equally maintaining that reſerve, which ſhe thought the ſituation ſhe was in demanded, and at the ſame time indulging the tenderneſs of her heart for a man, who ſo well deſerved it, ſhe enjoyed that ſweet contentment, which true love alone has the power of beſtowing.

CHAP. XXIV.

Is the laſt, and if the author's word may be taken for it, the beſt.

INnocent and pure as the inclinations of mrs. Munden were, it is highly probable, however, that ſhe was not ſorry to ſee the time arrive, which was to put an end to that cruel conſtraint her

charming lover had been ſo long under, and while it gave him leave to declare the whole fervency of the paſſion he was poſſeſt of, allowed her alſo to confeſs her own without a bluſh.

Mr. Trueworth, who had kept an exact account of the time, contrived it ſo, that a letter from him ſhould reach her hands the very next day after that, in which ſhe was to throw off her mourning weeds: — it was in theſe terms he now wrote.

To Mrs. MUNDEN.

'Madam,

'THE year of my probation is expired; — I have now fully performed the painful penance you enjoined, and you muſt expect me ſhortly at your feet, to claim that recompence which my ſubmiſſion has in ſome meaſure merited: — you cannot now without an injuſtice contrary to your nature, forbid me to approach you with my vows of everlaſting love, nor any longer reſtrain my impatient lips from uttering the languiſhments of my adoring heart, nor can I now content myſelf with telling you at the diſtance of ſo many miles, how very dear you are to me: — no, you muſt alſo read the tender declaration in my eyes, and hear it in my ſighs; — the laws of

tyrant

'tyrant cuſtom have been fulfilled in 'their moſt rigorous forms, and thoſe of 'gentler love may ſure demand an equal 'ſhare in our obedience: — fain would 'my flattering hopes perſuade me, that 'I ſhall not find you a too ſtubborn 'rebel to that power, to whoſe autho-'rity all nature yields a willing homage, 'and that my happineſs is a thing of 'ſome conſequence to you: — if I am 'too preſuming, at leaſt forgive me, but 'let your pen aſſure me you do ſo 'by the return of the poſt, till when I 'am, with a mixture of tranſport and 'anxiety,

'Madam,

'Your paſſionately devoted,

'And moſt faithful adorer,

'C. TRUEWORTH.

Though this was no more than mrs. Munden had expected, it diffuſed thro' her whole frame a glow of ſatisfaction, unknown to thoſe who do not love as ſhe did; — ſhe thought indeed, as well as he, that there was now no need of continuing that cruel conſtraint, ſhe ſo long had impoſed upon herſelf, and heſitated not if ſhe ſhould acknowledge what he before had not the leaſt cauſe to doubt; — the terms which ſhe expreſſed herſelf in, were theſe.

To Charles Trueworth, Eſq;

'Sir,

'I Know there is a great ſhare of impatience in the compoſition of your ſex, and wonder not at yours: — much leſs have I any pretence to accuſe you of preſumption, as you are too well acquainted with the juſt ſenſibility I have of your merits not to expect all the marks of it that an honourable paſſion can require: — an attempt to conceal my heart from you will be in vain; — you ſaw the inmoſt receſſes of it at a time when you ſhould moſt have been a ſtranger there; — but what was then my ſhame to have diſcovered, is now my glory to avow; and I ſcruple not to confeſs that whatever makes your happineſs will confirm mine: — but I muſt ſtop here, or when I ſee you I ſhall have nothing left to add, in return for the pains ſo ſo long a journey will coſt you; — let no anxieties however render the way more tedious, but reflect, that every ſtep will bring you ſtill nearer to a place where you may be certain of a reception equal to your wiſhes, from her, who is with an unfeigned ſincerity,

'Yours, &c.

'B. Munden

This

This was the firſt love-letter ſhe had ever wrote, and it muſt be owned that the paſſion ſhe was inſpired with, had already made her a pretty good proficient that way; —but though the prudiſh part of the ſex may perhaps accuſe her of having confeſſed too much, yet thoſe of a more reaſonable way of thinking, will be far from pronouncing ſentence againſt her; — the perſon of mr. Trueworth, his admirable endowments, — the ſervices he had done her, might well warrant the tenderneſs ſhe had for him; — his birth, his eſtate, his good character, and her own experience of his many virtues, ſufficiently authorized her acceptance of his offers; and it would have been only a piece of idle affectation in her, to have gone about to have concealed her regard for a perſon whom ſo many reaſons induced her to marry, — eſpecially as chance had ſo long before betrayed to him her inclinations in his favour.

Thus fully juſtified within herſelf, and aſſured of being ſo hereafter to all her friends, and to the world in general, ſhe indulged the moſt pleaſing ideas of her approaching happineſs, without the leaſt mixture of any of thoſe inquietudes, which pride, folly, ill-fortune, or ill-humour too frequently excite, to poiſon

all the ſweets of love, and imbitter the moſt tender paſſion.

As ſhe had not made lady Truſty the confidante of any part of what had paſſed between her and mr. Trueworth, deterred at firſt through ſhame, and afterwards by the uncertainty of his perſiſting in his addreſſes, that lady would have been greatly ſurprized at the extraordinary vivacity, which now on a ſudden ſparkled in her eyes, if there had not been other motives beſides the real one, by which ſhe might account for it.

Mrs. Munden had received intelligence, that lady Loveit was ſafely delivered of a ſon and heir, and what was yet more intereſting to her, that mr. Thoughtleſs was married to a young lady of a large fortune, and honourable family; —letters alſo came from mr. Francis Thoughtleſs, acquainting them that he had obtained leave from his colonel to leave the regiment for two whole mouths, and that after the celebration of his brother's nuptials, he would paſs the remainder of his furlow with them in L———e.

Theſe indeed were things which at another time would have highly delighted the mind of mrs. Munden, but at this, her thoughts

thoughts were ſo abſorb'd in mr. Trueworth, whom ſhe now every hour expected, that friendſhip, and even that natural affection which had hitherto been ſo diſtinguiſhable a part of her character, could now boaſt of but a ſecond place.

Lady Truſty obſerving her one day in a more than ordinary chearful humour, took that opportunity of diſcourſing her on a matter, which had been in her head for ſome time. — 'Mr. Munden has 'been dead a year,' ſaid ſhe; 'you have 'paid all that regard to his memory, 'which could have been expected from 'you, even for a better huſband, and 'cannot now be blamed for liſtening to 'any offers that may be made to your 'advantage.' — 'Offers, madam!' cried mrs. Munden, — 'on what ſcore does 'your ladyſhip mean?' — what others 'can you ſuppoſe,' replied ſhe gravely, 'than thoſe of marriage; — there are 'two gentlemen who have ſolicited both 'ſir Ralph and myſelf, to uſe our intereſt with you in their behalf, — neither of them are unworthy your conſideration; — the one is mr. Woodland, 'whom you have frequently ſeen here, 'his eſtate at preſent, indeed, is no more 'than eight hundred pound a year, but 'he has great expectations from a rich 'uncle: — the other is our vicar, who

'beſides

'beſides two large benefices, has lately 'had a windfall of near a thouſand 'pounds a year, by the death of 'his elder brother, and it is the opinion 'of moſt people, that he will be made a 'biſhop on the firſt vacancy.'

'So much the worſe, madam,' ſaid the ſpirituous mrs. Munden; 'for if he takes 'the due care he ought to do of his di-'oceſs, he will have little time to think 'of his wife:—as to mr. Woodland, 'indeed, I have but one objection to 'make, but that is a main one;—I do 'not like him, and am well aſſured I 'never can:—I therefore beg your la-'dyſhip,' continued ſhe with an air both 'ſerious and diſdainful, 'to adviſe them 'to deſiſt all thoughts of me, on the ac-'count you mention, and to let them 'know I did not come to L————e 'to get a huſband, but to avoid all im-'pertinent propoſals of that kind.'

'It is not in L————e,' replied lady Truſty, a little piqued at theſe laſt words, 'but in London you are to expect 'propoſals, deſerving this contempt;—'here are no falſe gloſſes to deceive 'or impoſe on the underſtanding;—'here are no pretenders to birth, or to 'eſtate, every one is known for what he 'he really is, and none will preſume to 'make

'make his addreſſes to a woman without a conſciouſneſs of being qualified to 'receive the approbation of her friends.

'I will not diſpute with your ladyſhip 'in this point, replied mrs. Munden, — 'I grant there is leſs artifice in the 'country than the town, and ſhould 'ſcarce make choice of a man that has 'been bred, and chuſes to reſide always 'in the latter; — but, madam, it is not 'the place of nativity, nor the birth, nor 'the eſtate, — but the perſon, and the 'temper of the man can make me truly 'happy; — I ſhall always pay a juſt re-'gard to the advice of my friends, and 'particularly to your ladyſhip; but as I 'have been once a ſacrifice to their per-'ſuaſions, I hope you will have the 'goodneſs to forgive me, when I ſay, 'that if ever I become a wife again, love, 'an infinity of love, ſhall be the chief 'inducement.'

'On whoſe ſide? cried lady Truſty haſtily; 'On both, I hope, madam,' replied mrs, Munden with a ſmile: 'Take 'care, my dear,' — rejoined the other, 'for if you ſhould find yourſelf de-'ceived in that of the man, your own 'would only ſerve to render you the 'more unhappy.'

The

The fair widow was about to make ſome anſwer, which perhaps would have let lady Truſty into the whole ſecret of her heart, if the converſation had not been broke off by a very loud ringing of the bell at the great gate of the court yard before the houſe, on which, as it was natural for them, they both ran to the window to ſee what company were coming.

The firſt object that preſented itſelf to them, was a very neat running footman, who on the gate being opened, came tripping up towards the houſe, and was immediately followed by a coach with one gentleman in it, drawn by ſix prancing horſes, and attended by two ſervants in rich liveries, and well mounted; lady Truſty was ſomewhat ſurpriſed, as ſhe never had ſeen either the perſon in the coach, or the equipage before, but infinitely more ſo when mrs. Munden ſtarting from the window, in the greateſt confuſion imaginable, cried, — 'Madam, 'with your leave, — I will ſpeak to him 'in the parlour.' — 'Speak to whom?" 'ſaid lady Truſty: — The other had not the power to anſwer, and was running out of the room, when a ſervant of ſir Ralph's came up to tell her, a gentleman, who called himſelf Trueworth, was come to wait on her. — I know — I know,

know,' cried ſhe, 'conduct him into the 'parlour.'

Prepared as ſhe was by the expectation of his arrival, all her preſence of mind was not ſufficient to enable her to ſtand the ſudden ruſh of joy, which on ſight of him burſt in upon her heart; — nor was he leſs overcome, — he ſprang into her arms, which of themſelves opened to receive him, and while he kiſſed away the tears that trickled from her eyes, his own bedewed her cheeks. — 'Oh 'have I lived to ſee you thus!' — cried he, — 'thus raviſhingly kind!' — 'And 'have I lived,' rejoined ſhe, 'to receive 'theſe proofs of affection from the beſt 'and moſt ill uſed of men: — Oh True-'worth! — Trueworth! added ſhe, 'I 'have not merited this from you'. — 'You merit all things, — ſaid he, 'let us 'talk no more of what is paſt, but tell 'me that you now are mine; — I came 'to make you ſo by the irrevocable ties of love and law, and we muſt now part no more! — Speak my angel, — my firſt, my laſt charmer,' continued he, perceiving ſhe was ſilent, bluſhed, and hung down her head; — 'let thoſe dear lips 'confirm my happineſs, and ſay the 'time is come, that you will be all mine. The trembling fair now having gathered a little more aſſurance, raiſed her eyes from

from the earth, and looking tenderly on him,— 'you know you have my heart, 'cried ſhe, and cannot doubt my hand.'

After this a conſiderable time was paſt in all thoſe mutual endearments, which honour and modeſty would permit, without mrs. Munden's once remembering the obligations ſhe was under of relieving lady Truſty from the conſternation ſhe had left her in.

That lady had indeed heard her ſervant ſay who was below, but as mrs. Munden had never mentioned the name of mr. Trueworth the whole time ſhe had been with her, and had not any ſuſpicion of the correſpondence between them, much leſs could have the leaſt notion of her affection for a gentleman, whom ſhe had once refuſed, in ſpite of the many advantages an alliance with him offered, nothing conld be more aſtoniſhing to her than this viſit, and the diſorder with which mrs. Munden went down to receive it.

She was ſtill ruminating on an event, which appeared ſo extaordinary to her, when the now happy lovers entered the room, and diſcovered by their countenances, ſome part of what ſhe wiſhed to know;— 'I beg leave, madam, ſaid mrs. Munden

Munden, 'to introduce to your ladyſhip, 'a gentleman whoſe name and character 'you are not unacquainted with, mr. 'Trueworth.

'I am, indeed, no ſtranger to both,' replied lady Truſty, advancing to receive him, 'nor to the reſpect they claim:' he returned this compliment with a politeneſs which was natural to him, and after they were ſeated, her ladyſhip beginning to expreſs the ſatisfaction ſhe felt in ſeeing a gentleman of whoſe amiable qualities ſhe had ſo high an idea;—'Your ladyſhip 'does me too much honour, ſaid he, but 'I fear you will repent this goodneſs, 'when you ſhall find I am come with an 'intent to rob you of a companion, who 'I know is very dear to you.'

'If you ſhould ſucceed in the robbery 'you mention, anſwered ſhe ſmiling, 'you will make me ample attonement 'for it by the pleaſure you will give me 'in knowing what I have loſt is in ſuch 'good hands.'

Mr. Trueworth had no time to make any reply to theſe obliging words, ſir Ralph who had dined abroad, came in that inſtant, not a little ſurprized to find ſo gay an equipage, and altogether unknown to him, before his door, but on his lady's ac-

acquainting him with the name of their new gueſt, welcomed him with a complaiſance not at all inferior to what ſhe had ſhewn.— There requires little ceremony between perſons of true breeding to enter into a freedom of converſation, and the good old baronet was beginning to entertain mr. Trueworth with ſome diſcourſes, which at another time would have been very agreeable to him, but that obedient lover having undertaken in order to ſave the bluſhes of his fair miſtreſs, to make them fully ſenſible of the motive, which had brought him into L———, delayed the performance no longer than was neceſſary to do it without abruptneſs.

Mrs. Munden, who in deſiring he ſhould break the matter, had not meant he ſhould do it ſo ſuddenly, or in her preſence, looked like the ſun juſt ſtarting from a cloud all the time he was ſpeaking, and was ready to die with ſhame when ſir Ralph ſaid, that ſince all things were concluded between them, and there was no need for farther courtſhip, he could not ſee any reaſon why their marriage ſhould not be immediately compleated: but lady Truſty, in compaſſion to her fair friend's confuſion, oppoſed this motion: — the next day after the ſucceeding one, was however appointed without any ſhew of reluctance

reluctance on the ſide of mrs. Munden, and the inexpreſſible ſatisfaction of Mr. Trueworth.

He had lain the night before at at inn about eight miles ſhort of ſir Ralph's ſeat, and as he had no acquaintance either with him or his lady, had intended to make that his home during his ſtay in the country, but ſir Ralph and lady Truſty would not conſent to his departure, and all he could obtain from them was permiſſion to ſend back his coach, with one ſervant to take care of the horſes.

No propoſals having yet been made concerning a ſettlement for mrs. Munden, by way of dowry, mr. Trueworth took ſir Ralph aſide the next morning, and deſired he would ſend for a lawyer, which he immediately did, — a gentleman of that profeſſion happening to live very near, — and on his coming, received ſuch inſtructions from mr. Trueworth for drawing up the writings, as convinced ſir Ralph both of the greatneſs of his generoſity, and the ſincerity of his love to the lady he was about to make his wife.

Expedition having been recommended to the lawyer, he returned ſoon after dinner with an inſtrument drawn up in ſo judicious a manner, that it required not

the leaſt alteration; — while ſir Ralph and mr. Trueworth were locked up with him in order to examine it, mrs. Munden received no inconſiderable addition to the preſent ſatisfaction of her mind, by the arrival of her brother Frank: — after the firſt welcome being given, — 'You are 'come, captain,' ſaid lady Truſty, 'juſt 'time enough to be a witneſs of your 'ſiſter's marriage, which is to be cele-'brated tomorrow.' — 'Marriage, cried he, — 'and without acquainting either 'of her brothers with her intentions! — 'but I hope, 'continued he, it is not 'to diſadvantage, as your ladyſhip ſeems 'not diſpleaſed at it.' — 'I aſſure you, 'captain,' reſumed lady Truſty, 'I knew 'nothing of the affair till yeſterday, nor 'had ever ſeen before the gentleman your 'ſiſter has made choice of, but love and 'deſtiny, added ſhe, 'are not to be re-'ſiſted.' Theſe words, and the ſerious air ſhe aſſumed in ſpeaking them, giving him cauſe to fear his ſiſter was going to throw herſelf away, he ſhook his head, and ſeemed in a good deal of uneaſineſs, but had not opportunity to teſtify what he felt, any otherwiſe than by his looks. — Sir Ralph and mr Trueworth in that inſtant entered the room; — the extreme ſurprize he was in at the ſight of the latter, was ſuch as prevented him from paying his reſpects to either in the man-

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ner he would have done, if more maſter of himſelf; but mr. Trueworth eaſily gueſſing the emotions of his mind, lock'd him in his arms, ſaying, — 'Dear Frank, 'I ſhall at laſt be ſo happy as to call you 'brother; — Heavens, is it poſſible! — cried he, 'Am I awake? or is this 'illuſion!' — then running to mrs. Munden, 'Siſter ſaid he, 'is what I hear a 'real fact! are you indeed to be married 'to mr. Trueworth?' — 'You hear I 'am,' anſwered ſhe ſmiling, 'and hear 'it from a mouth not accuſtomed to de-'ceit;' he then flew to mr. Trueworth, crying, 'My dear, dear Trueworth, I little hoped this honour: — then turning to lady Truſty, — 'Oh madam, ſaid he, 'how agreeably have you deceived me!' 'I knew it would be ſo,' — replied ſhe, 'yet I told you nothing but the truth.

The extravagance of the young captain's joy being a little over, mr. Trueworth preſented mrs. Munden with the parchment he had received from the lawyer, — What is this?' demanded ſhe: — 'Take it, take it,' cried ſir Ralph, 'it is 'no leſs than a ſettlement of eight hun-'dred pounds a year to you, in caſe of 'accidents. — I accept it, ſir,' ſaid mrs. Munden to mr. Trueworth, 'as a freſh 'proof of your affection, but heaven 'forbid I ſhould ever live to receive any 'other

'other advantage from it.' — He kiſſed her hand with the moſt tender tranſports on theſe obliging words; — after which, they all ſeated themſelves, and never was there a joy more perfect and ſincere than what each of this worthy company gave demonſtrations of in their reſpective characters. The next morning compleated the wiſhes o the enamoured pair, and the ſatisfaction of their friends.

An account of this event was diſpatched the next poſt to all, who had any welfare in the intereſt of the new wedded lovers: — mr. Thoughtleſs, though very much engroſſed by his own happineſs, could not but rejoice in the good fortune of his ſiſter: — ſir Baſil, who ſince his thorough knowledge of mrs. Munden, had a high eſteem for her, was extremely glad, but his lady was warm even to an exceſs in her congratulations: in fine, there were few of her acquaintance who did not in ſome meaſure take part in their felicity.

Thus were the virtues of our heroine, (thoſe follies that had defaced them being fully corrected) at length rewarded with a happineſs, retarded only till ſhe had render'd herſelf wholly worthy of receiving it.

F I N I S.

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